DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 419 171 CE 076 484

AUTHOR	Alt, Merilyn; Beatty, Dianne
TITLE	An Inclusive ACE. Broadening Participation in Adult and Community Education.
INSTITUTION	New South Wales Board of Adult and Community Education, Sydney (Australia).
SPONS AGENCY	Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	99p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; *Community Education; Educational Needs; Educational Research; Foreign Countries; *Government Role; *Learning Motivation; Lifelong Learning; Needs Assessment; *Participant Characteristics; *Participation; State Government; Student Motivation
IDENTIFIERS	*Australia

ABSTRACT

A project identified strategies to increase participation by community members who traditionally have not used adult and community education (ACE) in Australia. Methodology included a focus group, literature research, and interviews with 70 people. Government-supported ACE was seen as having a broad role in supporting lifelong learning. ACE participants were more likely than the community as a whole to be female, be between the ages of 35-54, speak English at home, and have a post-school qualification. Literature on barriers to ACE participation identified five major types of barriers: cultural and social, perceiving learning as irrelevant, personal and psychological factors, structural, and material; survey respondents' understanding of barriers was consistent. System-wide strategies for broadening participation were identified: establishment of central or regional ACE support structures; state and territorial government support of intersectoral cooperative and collaborative arrangements; funding incentives; and greater promotion. Provider strategies for broadening participation were identified: identifying learning needs, reflecting the community, assisting learners to learn, building on ACE's strengths, and working with other providers. Three major options for broadening participation emerged: facilitating learning, building on ACE's strengths, and opening doors wider. (Appendixes include participant lists, New South Wales government policy on ACE, and Victorian statewide funding model. Contains 55 references.) (YLB)

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ED 419 171

AN INCLUSIVE ACE

Broadening participation in adult and community education

Alt Statis & Associates

A project for the
NSW Board of Adult & Community Education
funded by the
Australian National Training Authority

CE 027 984

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This project was commissioned by the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education and funded by the Australian National Training Authority.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this report is to identify strategies for Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and providers which will ***broaden the profile of participation*** in adult and community education (ACE). The ACE covered by this report are those providers which comprise the government recognised and supported ACE sector in each State and Territory.

The ***current profile of participants*** in ACE indicates that users are more likely than the community as a whole to be female, be between the ages of 35 to 54, be parents in two-parent households or be living with a partner without children, or be living alone, to only speak English at home and to have a post-school qualification.

Broadening participation in ACE to more generally reflect the community, and in particular, to include adults who are not participating in any education and training, involves ***attracting people*** who do not perceive ACE as relevant to them, who are reluctant learners because of unsatisfactory schooling experiences or who lack broader social resources to feel confident as learners.

Adult learning occurs in a variety of ways from the most informal of self-directed learning occurring alone or through private interactions through to the more formal and structured post-school and higher educational learning. While this report does not mean to underestimate the power of self-directed learning, its focus is on that learning which may occur through the variety of educational provision which can be provided by ACE.

Lifelong learning is now widely considered vital both to enable workers to adapt to rapid changes and to enable individuals to participate as effective citizens and family members. The rapid changes in information technology and the globalisation of the economy put greater pressures on new learning occurring.

ACE is well placed to engage those reluctant to participate in formal learning opportunities. This involves assisting people to acknowledge and value their existing learning abilities and strategies as well as to learn new skills.

ACE incorporates adult education principles, a philosophy of local management and control and almost endless flexibility in the way learning is designed, structured and delivered. The ***greater exploitation of these intrinsic features of ACE***, combined with assisting communities to understand and identify their learning needs, is a potent means for assisting the process of lifelong learning. There are already examples in Australia of this sort of process occurring.

The ***limits to ACE's role*** in supporting a broader participation profile are also inherent features. For example, enhancing tutors' ability to work with learners with more complex

needs is constrained by the difficulties of a part time tutor workforce participating in professional development; developing a management and tutor profile which better reflects a broader learner profile may be impeded by local history.

Both overseas and Australian experience suggests that reaching out to those in the community who are not participating in general adult education is challenging and only achieved at a price. If governments want early school leavers and others who are most likely to be long-term unemployed or under-employed to become lifelong learners it needs to recognise that the current participant ***profile of ACE reflects***:

- the culture of ACE which has evolved to date
- the capacity to pay of ACE participants, and
- the involvement of those willing to learn via ACE (who may not be willing to learn in other settings).

The ***bottom line*** is that consistent government support to general adult education and ongoing and predictable funds will be needed to broaden participation. Such funds should be applied to the sorts of strategies discussed in this report and tied to participation targets rather than student contact hours alone. They should also support central and/or regional structures of ACE in each State and Territory to promote and support the broadening of participation, professional development and the promotion of good practice.

These conclusions have been reached on the basis of a ***literature search***, a ***survey of 70*** people ranging from ACE providers, researchers and program administrators through to representatives of groups who traditionally do not participate in ACE, plus a ***focus group*** of adult and community education practitioners, program administrators and researchers.

The ***National Policy on Adult Community Education***, endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers in 1993, already recognises the contribution ACE could make to assist adults who have fewer than 12 years of schooling into lifelong learning. However, the actual role which is recognised and supported in each State and Territory varies considerably. This reflects the different histories of the adult education movements in those States along with different government approaches.

The National Policy already covers a range of strategies which are important for broadening participation in ACE. This report focuses on some ***more explicit strategies*** which are required to achieve a more inclusive ACE. Internationally such approaches are often supported financially by national governments. Within the Australian context, these strategies could be pursued by the Commonwealth adding to the States' and Territories' efforts. These strategies are not likely to be achieved if the predominant financing of ACE, user pays, is the main basis for broadening participation.

Sections 5 and 6 of this report cover specific strategies aimed across the system and at the provider level. The following figure (which also appears as figure 7.1 in section 7) summarises the action recommended for broadening participation in ACE.

A more inclusive ACE in Australia will require:

- Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments' recognition, endorsement and support of the strategic role of ACE in contributing to lifelong learning for the educationally disadvantaged.

- Financial support from government which:
  - reflects the expectations it has for the sector
  - ensures equitable distribution of ACE providers throughout the States and Territories
  - incorporates a distribution of funding which recognises comparative socio-economic disadvantage of communities and potential participants as well as community development and individuals with lower fee paying capacity
  - is linked to the achievement of participation targets, recognising that student contact hours is a poor measure of success in judging a provider's participation profile and in assisting some groups who will have interrupted participation
  - includes national financial support for information, guidance and counselling targeted at people who did not complete schooling.

- ACE providers' demonstration of a commitment to becoming more inclusive of their communities by considering:
  - their management structure, power and profile
  - their staffing profile
  - professional development, especially learning diagnostics
  - improved community consultation, needs analysis, targeting and assistance in community development
  - accessible learner support strategies and packages
  - fully embracing adult education principles, especially learner centred strategies.

- The boundaries of ACE defined by each State and Territory to fully encompass service providers who are willing and able to meet the lifelong learning needs of disadvantaged groups within the community.

- Creation or maintenance of central or regional ACE structures to promote and support the broadening of participation and best practice.

- Greater co-operation (and rewards for such co-operation) between adult education providers, including negotiated agreements to cover development of learning pathways and shared use of infrastructure.

Critical elements in broadening ACE participation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A central element of this project was the survey of 70 people with a range of perspectives on ACE. (They are listed in Appendix D.) Their willingness to make time for the interviews and to share their views is much appreciated.

Christian Langeveldt of the University of Technology, Sydney Library provided an initial extensive identification of relevant literature. Sharon Lenord of the Dixson Library, University of New England, facilitated access to the documents required.

The project management committee and focus group participants provided helpful guidance and contacts. Yvonne Downs assisted the project with day-to-day liaison and support. The results remain the responsibility of the authors.

SECTION

1

THE PROJECT

1.1 Project brief and method

Alt Statis & Associates was contracted by the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) to identify strategies which were likely to increase participation by people in the community who traditionally have not used Adult and Community Education (ACE). The project was required to:

1. undertake a literature review covering international and Australian experience in increasing participation.

2. review the factors which lead to non-participation in ACE.

3. identify examples of best practice in increasing participation.

4. develop strategies for improving participation by traditional non-participants.

The project was funded by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Adult and Community Education Program. The project was directed by a management committee (see Appendix A). The project was required to survey a range of people throughout Australia representing training and ACE authorities, peak bodies and providers, union and employer representatives and research institutions.

Further focus to the brief was provided at the outset by the clients indicating that much good work has already been completed on points 2 and 3 within Australia,[1] so that the emphasis of this project would be to build on this work and the findings of the local and international literature in order to develop strategies for broadening participation. Two levels of strategies

[1] Including the recent report by R Bennink and P Blackwell (1995), *Access for all in Adult Community Education:- Overcoming barriers to participation*, ACE Unit, Department for Employment, Training and Further Education, South Australia. The recommendations of this report are reproduced in Appendix B.

were envisaged: those required across the ACE sector in all States and Territories and those that individual providers will need to pursue if they are to broaden the profile of ACE participation.

The project was conducted between late August and November 1996.

A focus group discussion involving ACE administrators and providers, other training representatives, an academic and the consultants, was held in week two to provide guidance to the project and to foreshadow areas of interest and concern (see Appendix C).

A literature search of 6 international and Australian education and general data bases[2] was conducted by the Education Library of the University of Technology, Sydney. Document retrieval was undertaken by the Dixson Library of the University of New England. Appendix G lists those references used to inform the study.

70 people from throughout Australia were interviewed in person or by telephone. These people were nominated by MCEETYA ACE Taskforce members, by the project's management group and by the focus group. Table 1.1 shows the range of people sampled.

The project brief called the people in the community who do not participate in ACE the "traditional non-participants". This term is also used widely in the literature. Many respondents to the project survey commented on the negativity implied by the word non-participants. This concern is shared by the consultants and instead the expression "broadening the profile of ACE participants" and "developing a more inclusive ACE" are used throughout this report.

Many also commented on the power of informal learning which occurs outside classes and the educational system. It was stressed that a "non-participant" is not necessarily a "non-learner". This view is implicit in our discussion.

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[2] Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Periodical Abstracts Research II, Australian Education Index, Australian Bibliographic Index, Sociofile and Australian Public Affairs Information Service.

1.2 Defining ACE

Reports on different aspects of ACE over the past 6 years have also found it necessary to define what they refer to as ACE. This is due to adult and community education occurring in and being provided by a huge variety of organisations. There are also peak community bodies who represent the broad interests of adult education and lifelong learning and who do not see themselves as confining their interests to a particular group of providers. This contrasts with government references to ACE which usually imply a subset of all adult and community education providers who are directly supported by funding from government.

The national policy on ACE avoids "a definition of the precise boundaries of ACE, recognising this is best done in each of the States and Territories".[3] **In this report ACE refers to those providers who are supported by government**.

This definition of ACE defines the scope of this project. It is not intended to put limits on the scope of adult and community education nor to suggest that this is the extent of education available to adults within their communities.[4]

Government support to the ACE sector varies considerably between States and Territories. Funding can be in the form of core funding, specific purpose program funding or the purchase of student contact hours. Special time limited adult education funding grants may also be made available at particular times and in designated areas for special projects (such as access initiatives) and for infrastructure and establishment costs.

This funding generally only covers administration, co-ordination and some infrastructure costs which means that the major proportion of ACE income is generated from learner fees. Other income sources of lesser magnitude include fund raising, donations and grants from other Government funding programs which support or use the teaching capabilities of the ACE sector (for example health promotion training grants from health programs).

Other Government support to the ACE sector is generally in the form of facilitation, information exchange and quality and professional development support.

These financing arrangements rely on:

- extensive use of volunteers in management and learning delivery

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3 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (1993), *National Policy Adult Community Education*, Australia.

4 Brown, T. and others (1994) provides a typology of adult and community education providers (Table 1, p.17). A more recent report, Schofield, K. & Associates (1996), *Think Local and Compete: An Analysis of the Role of Adult and Community Education in the Implementation of a national system for Vocational Education and Training*, Draft Report, ANTA, defines ACE as community-based providers distinct from public and private providers and the sector as a network of such providers.

- extensive use of casual or part-time tutors
- use of existing community or training infrastructure
- offering a menu of courses which have been proven to attract fee paying customers.

Table 1.2 summarises the extent of ACE provision in each of the States and Territories at the time of writing as well as Government ACE support structures.

In terms of broadening participation in ACE, the very boundaries of ACE (or what constitutes recognised ACE provision in some States and Territories) may themselves be a barrier. For example, where ACE is only delivered in a traditional formal education setting, it may not be considered an option for those with unhappy memories of formal education. In other locations, no government supported ACE may exist. This situation is referred to in section 4.

Analysis of ACE across Australia is constrained by several factors as identified in another recent study[5]:

- there is no agreed definition of ACE in Australia
- comparable, reliable data is not available to underpin major quantitative analysis
- the ACE sector could be considered as a developed sector in two States only. Therefore, as a sector, it does not lend itself readily to national analysis.

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5 Schofield, K. & Associates (1996).

1.3 Policy context

The National Policy on Adult Community Education, endorsed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers in December 1993, provides some broad directions which are very relevant to achieving broader participation in ACE. Figure 1.1 reproduces the principles adopted in the policy.[6]

1.	Adults have diverse and changing learning needs throughout their lives and require a correspondingly diverse range of responses with a variety of provision and a plurality of choice and educational pathways.
2.	Adults learn effectively when they are actively involved in decisions about the management, content, style and delivery of their learning.
3.	Adult learning is fostered through a curriculum and methodology which involves collaboration between teacher and learner.
4.	Adult learning should be accessible, appropriate, stimulating and affordable in recognition of differing circumstances and constraints.
5.	Local community organisations can readily identify and respond to the needs of their local community.
6.	Services should support and strengthen existing community networks and help create new ones.
7.	Community provision is more responsive and comprehensive when collaboration occurs between the sectors of education and training.

Figure 1.1 Principles in national ACE policy

The policy includes 6 general goals. Goal 2 (Access and Equity) and Goal 3 (Opportunities and Outcomes) address the issue of broadening participation in ACE, especially for those groups and individuals under-represented in employment, education and training. Intended outcomes and strategies are identified under each goal. These will be considered under the relevant parts of sections 5 and 6 on strategies.

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[6] Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (1993).

- This project focuses on strategies for broadening participation in ACE across Australia.
- The project draws on a survey of 70 people from throughout Australia with differing perspectives on and relations to ACE and an international literature search.
- ACE is defined as those providers recognised by each State and Territory as their ACE sector. This definition means that in some States ACE is community managed and operated while in other States it may include Stream 1000 courses in TAFE.
- The national policy on Adult Community Education incorporates goals and strategies relevant to broadening participation in ACE.

SECTION

2

LEARNING NEEDS AND ACE'S ROLE

2.1 Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning or the preparedness to learn new things throughout one's life is now seen widely as essential for participation in our rapidly changing modern society. Many recognise it as being essential to one's role as a worker as well as an individual, as a citizen, and as a family member.

The emergence of new technologies which are transforming the way things are done in many areas of life means that lifelong learning is not simply about learning something that one missed out on learning at a younger age but also about learning new things. In the area of information technology, the development of convergent technologies has been described as requiring a 'new literacy'.[7]

In terms of conventional literacy, recent research has shown that where a parent with a reading disorder in childhood is able to later compensate for that situation the risk of her/his children having a reading disorder is lower than if remedial action is not taken.[8]

OECD Education Ministers have recognised the significance of lifelong learning.

> *The Education Ministers agreed that, as the third millennium drew near, lifelong learning was becoming increasingly necessary and that it behoved societies, therefore, to make it accessible to all.*[9]

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7 *The New Literacy: Convergent Technologies in ACE*, (1996), Draft report.

8 See for example, Gilger, J.W., E. Hanebuth, S.D. Smith and B.F. Pennington (1996), "Differential risk for developmental reading disorders in the offspring of compensated versus noncompensated parents", *Reading and Writing*, 8, pp.407-417.

9 OECD (1996), *Innovations in Education*, 1, Paris.

In their meeting the Ministers particularly welcomed the OECD taking a role in identifying how best to implement the goal of lifelong learning to meet the learning needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups.

Initiatives by government and industry in other countries have clearly recognised the social and vocational value of people becoming willing learners. For example, employee development schemes in the United Kingdom are seen as a successful means of bringing generally lower participating groups, especially male manual workers, into education and training. Under these schemes employees are able to participate voluntarily in a wide range of general education which is financed by the employer, either in the workplace or elsewhere.[10]

The literature and commonsense indicate that much self-directed informal learning occurs throughout an adult's life. There is a clear link between self-directed and lifelong learning in society. A group of British academics indicates that:

> *Agonising about participation rates and their upward or downward movements, while not unnecessary, needs to be set in context. Participation in classes, courses and programmes may normally be one of a range of learning options available to adults and it may, because of convenience, immediacy, nature of orientation, be the least attractive of options. Or it may not be a question of options at all. We know enough about autodidaxy (as Candy terms it) in the early 19th century and before to suspect that self-directed learning may come more easily to adults than institutionalised education does. In a sense the development of formal systems of education, legally enforced until a certain age, may have undesirably circumscribed our ways of thinking about adult learning. Indeed, adults, to make the move to participate in formal provision, may normally require added incentives - for example, familiarity with and confidence about group learning, desire for social interaction, or need for institutionally recognised qualifications or accreditation.*[11]

The challenge for Australian governments is to ensure that the opportunities for more structured lifelong learning are not restricted for some members of the community by barriers to publicly supported adult education. Furthermore such education should assist people to recognise their learning capabilities and to become willing learners.

2.2 ACE's role

Government supported ACE is clearly seen as having a broad role in supporting lifelong learning. Goal 3 of the national ACE policy is to provide for lifelong learning. The three

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10 The Adult, Community and Further Education Board of Victoria is sponsoring a study to test the feasibility of such schemes in Victoria.

11 Percy, K. and others (1994), *Self-Directed Learning among Adults: The Challenge for Continuing Educators*, Association for Lifelong Learning, England.

intended outcomes under this goal further focus ACE efforts in lifelong learning.

Goal 3: **To provide diverse opportunities and outcomes for lifelong learning.**

Intended Outcomes:

3.1 Participation in ACE will increase, particularly by adults who have fewer than twelve years of schooling.

3.2 There will be increased opportunities for adults to develop and manage their own learning programs.

3.3 ACE will continue to provide programs which reflect learners' desires for

- social outcomes
- recreational outcomes
- vocational outcomes
- cultural outcomes
- civic outcomes
- personal outcomes
- income generating outcomes
- pathways to other sectors activities.

Figure 2.1 **Goal 3 from ACE National Policy**

ACE should be able to assist reluctant learners to learn, assist them to understand their learning and help them build confidence in learning processes. Through its capacity to use a broad range of pedagogical approaches it should, in co-operation with the individuals and communities concerned, be able to resolve how best to support relevant learning. There are many examples of situations where ACE performs this role.

Under an ACE delivered program, Aboriginal juvenile offenders constructed a basketball court in a North Coast NSW community. Juvenile Justice representatives urged for the course's extension after "remarkable" positive changes in its participants' attitudes, social skills and responsibility. In addition none of the participants (who were previously frequent repeat offenders) had committed an offence during the 6 month duration of the course. It was thought that its tight target group focus (compared to mainstream programs) contributed greatly to the course's outcomes.

(Unfortunately no funds were available for its continuation.)

Case Study 1 ***Fall in re-offences attributed to ACE course***

However many of the respondents to the project survey and much of the literature indicates that ACE within Australia may not universally take this approach. ACE providers are seen as being generally responsive to expressed community needs. However these needs are more likely to be expressed by people who are already educationally confident.

The paradigm which links economic and social progress, lifelong learning and adult and community education is well summarised by two British academics.

> *Questions of access and delivery in continuing education and training have become a priority on a world wide scale. At the centre of the debate are economic and philosophical pressures for change. Increased access to and improved delivery of education and training are perceived as prerequisites for the creation of a flexible and adaptable workforce in a time of rapid technical and structural change. The link between the economic health of the nation and the performance of education and training has now become firmly rooted in the minds of both the public and the policy makers. Added to this is the notion that all members of society should have the opportunity to continue to learn and develop throughout life. This includes those members of society who have benefitted least from compulsory education.*[12]

Those interviewed for this study supported a strong role for ACE in this change. They particularly noted ACE's potential in encouraging and supporting 'second chance' adult learners.

- Lifelong learning is widely accepted as necessary for all citizens. The most reluctant learners are likely to be those who left school early or for other reasons lack the social resources to recognise their learning capabilities.
- ACE through its flexibility and community management has the potential to assist such people to enjoy and to benefit from lifelong learning.

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12 Bridge, H. and H. Salt (1992), *Access and Delivery in Continuing Education and Training: a guide to contemporary literature*, Department of Adult Education and Employment, Nottingham University, England.

SECTION

3

WHO PARTICIPATES IN ACE AND WHO DOESN'T

3.1 The profile of ACE participants

The profile of ACE participation across Australia is not clear. The Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) will provide a clearer picture than has ever existed of who participates in government supported ACE and the courses being taken. This data will significantly enhance the ability of researchers to analyse ACE provision and participation. Reservations were expressed by respondents in one State who identified that AVETMISS will not pick up either all ACE provision or the profile of some participants.

The consultants were unable to access the AVETMISS data on a national basis for this project.

The information on the profile of participants in adult education in Australia is from a range of sources. They indicate that total participation in adult education is significant. For example, aside from TAFE, university and other formal programs of study, one survey estimates that about one quarter of adult Australians had undertaken a short course or other organised learning activity in the previous year.[13] However most data sources do not confine themselves to or identify adult learning occurring within ACE centres.

The most relevant study in this regard was completed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics[14] for the Adult, Community and Further Education Board in Victoria last year. The study considered the profile of 1992 course participants in a sample of centres in Victoria, NSW and South Australia. The profile of the 2,388 people who responded to the survey may be summarised as:

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13 AAACE (1995), *Who are Australia's Adult Learners?*, Canberra.

14 Australian Bureau of Statistics (1995), *Outcomes and Pathways in Adult and Community Education*, Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Victoria.

- 79% of participants were female.
- People aged 35 to 54 years made up almost half of the participants, while those aged 55 years or over comprised another quarter.
- 39% were parents in two-parent households, 29% were with a partner and without children, 11% were people living alone and 7% were sole parents.
- 82% of the sample spoke only English at home.
- About half of the respondents had a post-school qualification.
- 47% were employed either full-time or part-time and 42% were not in the labour force (those not employed and not seeking work). 9% were unemployed.

Table 3.1 contrasts this profile with the general community profile of NSW, Victoria and SA as measured by the 1991 population census.

Table 3.1 Profile of ACE participants and the population of NSW, Victoria and South Australia aged 15 and over.

Characteristic	ACE participants, 1992 (%)	Population aged 15 & over, 1991 (%)
Gender:		
Women	79	51
Age:		
35-54	47	33
55 +	28	26
Household:		
- 2 parents with children	39	35
- partner, no children	29	20
Language:		
- speak English only	82	80
Highest educational qualification:		
- bachelor or post-graduate qualification	15	8

Source:
- ACE participation from Australian Bureau of Statistics (1995).
- General population data from 1991 Population Census, persons aged 15 years and over in Victoria, NSW and South Australia.

These Australian results[15] are consistent with international findings.

> *A number of well-known and now almost classic studies, such as that of Johnston and Rivera (1965) have painted a clear picture of the socially unrepresentative nature of participation in adult education. The social patterns of participation and non-participation show great similarities in a large number of advanced industrial countries.*[16]

Woodley *et al.* found that:

> *The empirical evidence .... consistently shows that adult education of all kinds recruits disproportionately from certain parts of the adult population: those of working age rather than the retired; those in non-manual rather than manual occupations; and those with more than minimal previous educational success.*[17]

It has also been found that the general profile of adult participants appears to be consistent at all levels of education and that the same general characteristics distinguish participants from others in all occupational and class groups. Hedoux [18] found that:

> *Participation in education within working-class groups is governed by exactly the same sociological factors that create inequalities in access between different classes and social levels. ..Hedoux.... discovered that participants ... comprised an "active social minority" characterised by certain favourable attributes, namely:* good material circumstances *(higher income and occupational levels);* greater mobility *(ability to anticipate and instigate social change);* cultural familiarity *(higher level of schooling, extended social relationships and cultural practices).*

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15 Some ACE providers, such as Illawarra WEA in NSW and Learning Centre Link in Western Australia, argue that these national results do not reflect their particular profile.

16 Doerbecker, C.L. and B.J. Hake (1980), *Educational Needs Research and Mobilising Strategies in Adult Education,* State University of Groningen and State University of Leiden, Netherlands.

17 Woodley, A. and others (1987), *Choosing to Learn: Adults in Education,* Milton Keynes: Society for Research into Higher Education, Open University Press.

18 Hedoux, J. (1982) "Des publics at des non-publics de la formation d'adultes: Sallaumines-Noyelles-sous-Lens des 1972", *Revue Francaise Sociologique,* April-June, pp. 273-74, quoted and translated by McGivney, V. (1990), *Education's for Other People: Access to Education for Non-participant Adults,* NIACE, Leicester.

3.2 Who doesn't participate in ACE?

The inverse of the profile of ACE participants is the profile of people who do not use ACE. From the focus group and the literature the following list of groups within the population was identified as including most of those people who traditionally do not participate in ACE:

- street kids and other young people at risk
- people with a disability or other learning disability
- some groups of women (particularly those with low levels of personal autonomy arising from culture, child care commitments, etc)
- people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island descent
- minority linguistic groups
- people with a low income
- unemployed people
- people with a short or poor educational history
- people with low learning confidence and expectations
- men in manual occupations
- ex-offenders
- some rural populations.

This listing however is not intended to be a precise classification and is not suggested as a typology for such purposes. Furthermore, the group characteristics are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Also some ACE providers indicated that they regularly involved some people from some of these groups.

At least one writer[19] has warned against the use of socio-economic status as an explanation of non-participation in adult education. James argues that socio-economic status "in reality reflects conditions faced by larger social forces". Within the US context he argues that participation research has been conceived in ways that are biased towards African Americans and other minorities. His concern is that these biases suggest that non-participation is the fault of the potential participant while no consideration if any is given to the broader social forces

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[19] James, R.N. (1994), "African Americans and Adult Literacy Education: Towards a more inclusive model of participation." in Hyams, M. and others *35th Annual Adult Education Research Conference Proceedings*, Knoxville.

which may have influenced non-participation. He contends that research into understanding participation "must be attuned to the effects of cultural and racial oppression and these conditions impact upon not only how minority groups view schooling but how researchers also view these minorities".

Early school leaving is a trait common to people not participating in ACE.

Many commentators describe early school leavers as the "learning damaged". This term implies that not only have people in this category not left school with relevant qualifications but the process of learning for them holds many negative connotations and educational institutions have not served them well.[20] ACE through its flexibility, application of adult education principles and capacity to be de-institutionalised, has a greater potential over many other education and training providers to assist the learning damaged.

Early school leavers are seen by OECD Education Ministers as a priority group needing help to attain lifelong learning.[21]

A UK study indicated that:

> *The UK is increasingly two nations: one convinced of the value of learning, participating regularly and planning to do more; the other choosing not to join the learning society.*[22]

McGivney defines the population in terms of ACE participation as comprising three nations:

1. Those who participate: those who continue formal learning throughout their life.

2. Those who will participate with appropriate encouragement or prompts, appropriate course design and removal of barriers, and

3. The "radical non-participants"[23], those people who shun all training opportunities and will often indicate they are not interested or too busy (this usually masks their actual reasons for non-participation). McGivney indicated that "concerted and co-ordinated strategies by policy makers and providers

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20 For example, see the report, Curriculum Corporation (1996), *Everyday literacy practices in and out of schools in low socio-economic urban communities*, Queensland.

21 OECD (1996).

22 Tuckett, A. and Sargant (1996), quoted in McGivney, V. (1996), *Who is and Who isn't participating in adult education: international and national perspectives*, speech to Conference "Participation's everyone's business", Coogee.

23 This is a term used by McGivney but originally coined by J. Hedoux (1981) in "Les non-publics de la formation collective", *Education Permanente*, 61, December, pp. 89-105.

working in partnership" were required to achieve lifelong learning for this group.[24]

Two Dutch academics[25] have developed another set of categories. The five categories are described as:

1. *The active loyalists*

   This category among adults consists mainly of those in the middle socio-economic categories with an education at college level or above. They have mainly middle and higher level management, technical or scientific jobs, and are loyal to the dominant value system in our achievement oriented society. They are active in relation to adult education and other forms of social and cultural activities. Spontaneous and regular participation is most frequent among this category.

2. *The active radicals*

   This second category forms probably a small minority of adults, especially those who are most actively engaged in radical or critical educational movements. This radical category has a long and rich tradition in those forms of adult education which are informed by social criticism and associated with social movements.

3. *The non-active*

   The non-active do not participate in adult and education and are most unlikely to do so in the near future. They are the largest group among the non-participants. Research seems to show a relation between little interest for adult education and a use of free time characterised by a limited scope of activities in the direct family circle.

4. *The pro-active*

   The pro-active are not by tradition participants in adult education, and in that sense share the same social and educational background as the non-active. The reasons for their newfound interest in adult education - thus the nature of their pro-activity - are to be found in changing social circumstances which influence their personal social situation. Social, technological and cultural changes produce problems which the pro-active have not previously experienced, and these problems stimulate their potential interest in adult education.

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[24] McGivney, V. (1996).

[25] Doerbecker, C.L. and B. Hake (1980).

5. *The passive*

This category is comprised of individuals, families and indeed whole neighbourhoods who are seriously disadvantaged. Theirs is not a situation characterised by disadvantage in terms of education alone, but by multiple disadvantage.

We use the term passive in regard to their relation to adult education quite deliberately, but without any intention to stigmatise them or to resort to social labelling. Their passivity for us rests in their non-participation in adult education and the absence on their part of an idea that adult education may be of relevance to their very serious and complex problems. Given that most traditional adult education ignores them and their existence, their non-participation and lack of interest may be perfectly rational.

- The participation profile of Australian ACE (as defined) is not well documented.
- From the data available, it appears that Australian participation is similar to other western industrialised countries. That is, participants generally have completed more education, are more likely to be of working age and less likely to be of an ethnic minority.
- The literature includes many overseas studies which try to explain and categorise the motivations of people who do and do not participate in adult education. No such studies seem to have been undertaken in Australia.

SECTION

4

BARRIERS TO BROADER PARTICIPATION

4.1 The literature

The literature on barriers to participation in adult and community education is extensive. One of the leading authorities on this subject, Veronica McGivney, visited Australia during 1996. McGivney[26] identifies five major types of barriers to participation for "radical non-participants"in decreasing importance:

- *cultural and social:* This category includes factors such as gender, race and social class which "impact on decisions to learn as each is associated with particular cultural pressures and norms". McGivney argues that one of the hardest to reach groups affected by this category of barriers is male manual workers in the United Kingdom who experience a group culture of conformity and solidarity against general education.

- *perceiving learning as irrelevant and without value:* McGivney argues that some people will express a lack of interest in engaging in education because they may not identify their needs as being learning needs or consider that education could meet these needs. Although such people acquire new skills informally, they believe learning only occurs via a structured and assessed process.

- *personal and psychological factors:* As a result of negative compulsory education experiences, many adults shun anything associated with education. Others may feel intimidated by their perceptions of educational institutions, may consider themselves too old to learn or may undervalue their existing experience, abilities and skills.

- *structural issues:* This category covers both local barriers to participation

26 McGivney, V. (1996).

arising from limited opportunities, infrastructure or encouragement as well as constraints imposed by the education and training system of a nation, State or region (including eligibility requirements or procedures, fees, insufficient accessible entry level places and limited learning advice).

- *material barriers:* Time, money, caring responsibilities and transport may present significant barriers to participation. McGivney argues that because these barriers are the most obvious, easily understood and represent face saving reasons for non-engagement, they are the barriers most frequently mentioned in surveys and other studies. They often mask more complex and intransigent barriers to participation.

McGivney ranks these issues in this order as the overcoming of a lower order barrier, say a material barrier such as child care, will not assist participation if a potential learner is subject to one of her higher ranking categories. The recent report *Access for all in Adult Community Education*[27] argued similarly. Using a categorisation of barriers of dispositional, situational and institutional, the report finds that:

> *Dispositional factors seem to be a primary factor to consider before attempting to overcome situational barriers. For example someone with low self confidence may never join a class even though it is located nearby, child care is available and the timing and cost is acceptable.*

The consultations and forums conducted for their study led Bennink and Blackwell to rank barriers in the following order:

- low self confidence
- lack of awareness
- cost
- inappropriate structure/content/delivery of courses
- lack of transport
- previous educational experience
- family commitments
- lack of interest/relevance
- accessibility of facilities/services (physical and psychological)
- lack of support

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27 Bennink, R. and P. Blackwell (1995)

- socialisation
- negative image of ACE
- lack of time.

This typology is consistent with another used in the British literature: financial, domestic, geographical, situational and cultural barriers.

4.2 Survey responses

The survey respondents' understanding of barriers was consistent with the literature. The four major barriers, given similar ranking, were described as:

1. Educational history.
2. Confidence level or fear of failure by the potential participant.
3. The cost of attending the course.[28]
4. The culture and values of ACE providers and their style of delivery.

Other significant barriers were considered to be:

- the language and literacy levels of potential participants
- the absence of appropriately trained staff who reflected, in a cultural and language sense, the potential participants
- cultural and/or family pressures not to participate
- the time and location of courses.

Difficulty in accessing appropriate transport and child care were also significant barriers.

Many of the respondents argued that ACE had strong inherent features which equipped it well to respond to emerging learning needs, including that:

- ACE courses are responsive to expressed community interest and needs

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[28] This concept goes beyond simply the course fee to other costs incurred. It is presented in a cost benefit framework in J. McIntyre (1996).

- learning is informal, locally designed and consumer driven
- learning is flexible with few pre-requisite entry levels and tolerance of learners' intermittent attendances
- tutors are generally expert or enthusiastic in their subject area
- locations are often decentralised and selected to reflect the learning needs of participants and the requirements of each course
- local management can ensure that local needs and priorities are addressed
- inter sectoral co-operation and innovative education may flourish.

These respondents argued that these features meant that ACE has great potential to assist reluctant and first time adult learners into formal education.

However it was also recognised that:

- ACE delivery is more likely to reflect the learning needs of confident or lifelong learners than reluctant learners
- there is little financial ability to undertake extensive community development to assist reluctant learners into the system
- there is little financial ability to run courses in areas or for groups who are not able to contribute significantly to costs
- learning supports, such as child care, and infrastructure may be less than optimal
- enthusiastic and committed tutors may not have the extensive teaching skills required to support learners with complex needs
- communication and support between part-time tutors and managers and students, especially where dispersed locations are used, may be extremely limited
- professional assistance to staff, tutors and management may be restricted
- there may be very little financial ability to provide professional development - for tutors as well as for committee members and staff in management, curriculum development, needs analysis and strategies to widen participation
- the management and staff profile may reflect a dominant group in the community rather than the diverse profile of desired participants

- reluctant learners with previously poor educational experience may have these experiences reinforced
- learners with challenging behaviours may quickly feel and be rejected by ACE centres
- information, learning pathways and options may not be readily available
- ACE providers may receive little or no support from other local training providers.

A number of other respondents identified that many potential ACE participants were disadvantaged because of an inequitable distribution of ACE providers and resources. This barrier was compounded where there was little capacity within poorer socioeconomic areas to cross subsidise those potential participants with little ability to pay fees.

The majority of respondents welcomed ACE's move into vocational provision seeing it as offering greater diversity to vocational training and expanding ACE's repertoire of abilities. However some concerns remained about perceptions that it now overshadowed and could negatively affect the positive and flexible aspects of ACE's general adult education delivery. It was felt that these perceptions added further barriers to some potential learners' reluctance to engage in ACE.

Similar concerns were also expressed about widening ACE's participation. Without an injection of additional resources, a number of respondents asked at whose expense broadened participation would be achieved. One person argued that ACE's participants were other training and education providers' non-participants.

4.3 What does this mean for adult educators?

ACE's participation profile and the barriers outlined combine to present a formidable challenge to governments and the adult education system if participation is to be broadened. McGivney[29] argues that the whole package of support must be attractive to reluctant learners, presenting a clear and consistent message about the significant personal pay-offs involved in returning to education. She states that these packages must incorporate:

- special attention to reluctant learners by ACE providers (which requires special ACE funding mechanisms)
- learner information and guidance
- course presentation, supports (such as child care, reduced fees, accessible sites)

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29 McGivney, V. (1996).

and delivery which is attractive to reluctant adult learners

- recognition of learning success and outcomes
- provision of progression ladders.

She also argues that:

> *One of the principal reasons for non-participation is the education system itself. The middle-class character of adult education is a well-documented, international phenomenon. Mee and Wiltshire (1978) estimated that only 5 per cent of education provision for adults was targeted at educationally or socially disadvantaged groups.... It is not surprising, therefore, that amid all the identified reasons for non-participation, one factor consistently stands out. People who have ostensibly "failed" in the school system do not wish to repeat that failure. Many are consequently suspicious of education in any form, even informal learning opportunities specifically designed for them.*[30]

Shore and others[31] in a report on developing an inclusive language, literacy and numeracy curriculum argued that its driving force must be social justice:

> *Classroom practices and individual learning needs will be shaped by the various economic, social, and cultural positions that learners occupy. We have forwarded an argument that Australian society selectively enhances opportunities for particular social groups. The aim ..... is to give those people positioned beyond these advantaged groups a space wherein they can speak, they can be heard, and their concerns can be honoured. These characteristics are at the heart of a positive politics of difference.... (This) has three implications.*
>
> *First, there needs to be a willingness on the part of all involved in provision to reconsider how relations of power shape provision. This may require that those of us in privileged positions may have to relinquish our hold.....*
>
> *Second, a commitment is needed within institutions to reconceptualise how policy will be informed in this new culture by a positive approach to difference. This will require managers, learners, and educators to make decisions and coordinate their work in new ways.*
>
> *Third, this process will require courage to work outside prevailing dominant discourses..... (This) means challenging our own role in perpetuating that which is oppressive and unjust in existing ... practices.*
>
> *These implications go beyond simplistic budgetary increase and an enhanced*

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30 McGivney, V. (1990), *Education's for Other People: Access to Education for Non-participant Adults*, Leicester, NIACE.

31 Shore, S. and others (1993), *Positively different: guidance for developing inclusive adult literacy, language, and numeracy curricula.* Department of Employment, Education, and Training, Canberra

administrative infrastructure. While funding increases are desirable, ... existing patterns of distribution will only perpetuate educational inequalities and serve to advantage privileged groups further.

- There are many studies reviewing barriers to participation in adult education. Barriers include:
  - cultural and social pressures
  - participants perceiving learning as irrelevant and without value
  - personal and psychological barriers, often associated with feelings of failure from school experiences
  - structural barriers
  - material barriers (such as time, money and caring responsibilities).
- Those interviewed for this study agreed that these were significant barriers in Australian ACE.
- While ACE has great potential to respond to the needs of reluctant learners, its current management and financing arrangements may affect this capacity.
- Reluctant learners are wary of education in any form even informal learning opportunities specifically designed for them.
- Concerted effort, including financial contributions, will be required to ensure that the ACE system can answer the learning needs of reluctant learners.

SECTION

5

SYSTEM WIDE STRATEGIES FOR BROADENING PARTICIPATION

This section considers strategies across Australia and at the level of State and Territory governments which could broaden the participation profile of ACE. Ideas are drawn from the project survey, the literature, the focus group and our own deliberations. The relevant sections of the National ACE Policy are highlighted.

5.1 ACE and government

As the bulk of the ACE sector is locally managed and controlled and is financed largely through course fees, government's relationship with the sector is one of support, recognition and encouragement. If it wishes to pursue particular goals with the assistance of ACE, this will necessarily involve funds for the particular purposes. This has been the case in the contribution by ACE to the vocational education and training effort and the delivery of adult literacy programs.

Government also needs to be aware of the impact of its relationship with ACE on potential learners. For example, McGivney argues that conflicting messages from government about training and the availability of training places add to barriers to participation.[32]

The ageing of the population alone is expected to increase the demand for ACE.

> *Though there are distinct economic benefits to society of having a population which is adequately prepared to meet a changing environment, learning throughout life also has an important social aspect given the increased longevity of the population of advanced industrial countries.*[33]

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32 McGivney, V. (1996).

33 Kemp, Dr D. (1996), an extract of a speech at the National Launch of Adult Learners Week in AAACE *Adult Learning Australia*, September.

A Carnegie inquiry[34] in the United Kingdom argues that fresh policies are needed on learning for the third age (ie older adults) and that it is through such policies that lifelong learning will become a reality. It argues that learning in the third age cannot be separated from policies for society as a whole. The report proposes government action ranging from clear policy statements, the setting of targets, expanded resourcing of older workers' training and adult education provisions through to broader guidance and information relating to learning and employment opportunities.

Almost half the respondents to this project survey argued that there needed to be greater government commitment to general adult education with less strings attached to that support. One third of respondents believed greater government commitment to adult learning through policies, structures and resources was required. A recent report[35] to ANTA suggests that in order to minimise any negative impact on general adult education from increased involvement of ACE providers in the delivery of VET programs, all governments could make an explicit commitment to support lifelong learning through general adult education.

The current National Policy gives recognition to lifelong learning and the need for ACE to provide opportunities for early school leavers. The National Policy could be expanded to outline strategies to broaden participation and strengthen management and administration which can be implemented at a State and Territory, regional and local level.

Other central governments have provided more direct resources for adult education. For example, in Germany community adult education centres receive about 62% of their income from direct government grants.[36] State laws guarantee minimum levels of education provision and provide paid educational leave to pursue vocational and/or political or civics education.[37] This funding support enables the centres to meet local needs particularly for people with a poor educational history or who have other special needs or who are unemployed. The government is also supporting a model educational counselling and advice service within community adult education centres.

The British government provides little support to adult education centres. However it does provide funds for training and enterprise councils which provide an array of initiatives including information, advice and guidance for lifelong learning as well as establishing employee development schemes. The government contributes to the cost of these schemes.

Broadening ACE's participation profile in Australia will similarly require a combination of government funding and support in order to truly identify and respond educationally to social

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34 Schuller, T. and A. Boston (1993), *Learning: Education, Training and Information in the Third Age. The Carnegie Inquiry into the Third Age.*, Research Paper Number 3. Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, Dunfermline, Scotland.

35 K. Schofield & Associates (1996).

36 This compares with Government financing about one third of local ACE activities in NSW.

37 Brown, T. (1995), *Adult learning for work and life: ACE and VET in Germany and Britain*. A report to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in Australia.

needs (as indicated in the national ACE policy), and therefore effecting a transformation from a provider of a menu of courses for a sub-set of the community to a provider whose service is addressing the learning needs of a broader community.

Central support to ACE managers will be required to assist them to hone their skills and those of their staff and tutors to meet the challenges of a more diverse array of learners as well as to conduct proactive community and individual learning needs analysis and development. Although community management offers great opportunities, volunteer managers will need advice, support and models to make the desired changes. The use of designated positions for particular target groups may also be required to begin to change ACE's profile to reflect the desired profile of participants.

NSW and Victorian ACE's use of regional advisers

Regional officers are used in both Victoria and NSW to advise Regional ACE Councils, to coordinate regional ACE delivery and to assist local ACE providers.

Queensland Language and Literacy management and curricula support initiatives

The Queensland language and literacy community grant program has over the past three years as part of a five year plan, implemented a range of strategies to improve program outcomes. These were introduced as it was recognised that many small groups (who offered the advantage of being close to their communities and to their clients) may have been disadvantaged by the submission based funding system, were intimidated by moves to accredited training and needed resources to improve program quality. Strategies included:

- *the distribution of an information package to assist applicant organisations to prepare submissions*
- *the collection of the first statistics on delivery and the subsequent development of an evaluation package*
- *the conduct of 15 workshops around the State. By the end of these workshops, groups were writing their own short courses and identifying where accredited training was most appropriate, or not appropriate.*
- *the outline of an array of support and course options from which providers could choose (including an accredited TAFE literacy course; a generic registered short course to which groups could apply their particular requirements, strategies and ideas; course purchase; developing their own courses; or assistance with community development, learning needs analysis and planning).*

Case study 2: Support to ACE Providers

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY:

That central or regional ACE support structures be established and/or maintained in each State and Territory to promote and support the broadening of participation, professional development and the promotion of good practice.

5.2 ACE structures and partnerships

One third of the survey respondents believed that ACE needs to work on partnerships with other education and training providers and other service agencies in order to broaden its participation profile. More emphasis was placed on this occurring at the local level and this approach is discussed further in section 6. However many participants felt that greater attention needed to be given to education and training pathways, recognition of higher learning, accreditation, and negotiation of intersectoral co-operative agreements and that much of this work needed to be done at the central State or Territory level. However one respondent argued that it was important to avoid building bureaucratic bridges as these would only weigh down the ACE sector.

A review of the British literature notes that collaboration and working partnerships between higher education, community education, training and enterprise councils and employers has become an increasingly pertinent issue to ensure that progression routes for all learners are open and flexible. It also notes that the British Employment Department actively promotes these partnerships and its involvement in them through the development of policy documents intended to stimulate dialogue between all the parties.[38]

The National ACE Policy[39] includes

> *Intended Outcome 2.3: Barriers to the participation of groups under-represented in employment, education and training will be reduced.*
>
> *Strategy E: facilitate flexible and affordable use by ACE of public resources, technology and venues.*

Some respondents argued that there are no rewards for providers to co-operate beyond their own appreciation that it benefits the community. System incentives or financial rewards for co-operation should be considered.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY:

That State and Territory governments encourage and support inter-sectoral cooperative and collaborative arrangements.

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38 Bridge, H. and H. Salt (1992).

39 MCEETYA (1993).

5.3 Funding incentives and reform

One third of survey respondents thought that more funds needed to be provided to the ACE sector and particularly more financial support for non-accredited general adult education in order for ACE to broaden its participant profile. The costs of the total learning "packages" (or mix of strategies) required to broaden participation and to support first time and reluctant adult learners were acknowledged as being higher than for other learners.

Almost as many indicated that ACE needed to have different fee arrangements which explicitly recognised the lower ability of some groups and some communities to participate on a user pays basis. This was seen as of concern for low income families as well as for pensioners and the unemployed. Free entry courses were also seen as an effective means of increasing participation and an essential part of any revised fee arrangements.

Several respondents pointed to the limits to cross-subsidisation of provision in different communities.

Targeting of funds to specifically involve people not currently participating in ACE was seen as essential by most respondents.

Others argued that better needs analysis was required to guide funding at the State level. Victoria has introduced a regional funding model (see Appendix F) by which 80% of funds are allocated to regions according to "equality of access" derived from the distribution of the population aged 15 years and over without post school qualifications and from the availability of government supported ACE activity.

The individual provider funding in Victoria and NSW which ties administrative funding to enrolments or student contact hours was seen by many as inhibiting attempts to broaden participation as part of the core business of ACE providers. Such an approach provides little incentive to redirect efforts to encouraging reluctant learners or to otherwise change the participant profile of ACE. Given the unpredictability of attendance of many of the hardest to involve groups, some security of funding was seen as essential. Others argued that triennial funding would be an improvement by enabling providers to better plan and develop services to newer groups.

The idea of funding to employ designated staff to reflect particular target groups was also proposed. It was also argued that it was difficult to maintain access and equity initiatives when they were insufficiently financed through general revenue and when special funding initiatives tended to be interrupted or of a stop-start nature.

Some argued that performance targets should be attached to general support funding to ACE to ensure that participation profiles were broadened and that efforts to broaden participation were seen to be part of ACE's core business. Others pointed to the need for Government support to all general adult education providers who were willing to achieve specified outcomes and participation targets. That is, the limits of recognised ACE need to be extended beyond current boundaries in some States.

Reallocation of existing funding could have an impact over time, although it could be disruptive in the short term if individual providers are not initially protected from major funding changes. However it is hard to see how such desired changes in participation targets could be achieved unless government funding nationally is increased beyond current contributions.

The National ACE Policy identifies a number of funding and incentive strategies for broadening participation:

> 2.3 (a) *Provide incentives through designated funding for ACE to identify and overcome barriers to participation.*
>
> (c) *Provide incentives for the development of local provision.*
>
> 3.1 (a) *Diversify the funding base of community provision by identifying further opportunities for providers to conduct programs.*
>
> 3.3 (c) *Provide training and access to information about available funding, submission preparation, adult learning principles and program management.*

The functions of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) set down in its legislation[40] include administering national programs. ANTA administers a modest national ACE program which includes funding of Adult Learners Week, core funding for the national peak body, the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education and the financing of the ACE research and development program.

One of ANTA's main aims is to promote:

> ***increased opportunities and improved outcomes*** *for individuals and target groups, including school leavers, to enhance their employment outcomes.*[41]

The mission statement in the National Goals for Vocational Education and Training has two aims. The second is to:

> *improve the knowledge, skills and quality of life for Australians, having regard to the particular needs of disadvantaged groups.*[42]

Other national governments have combined a commitment to lifelong learning with the understanding that for reluctant learners this process may begin with general adult education

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40 *Australian National Training Authority Act 1992*, No. 203 of 1992.

41 From the Schedule to the ANTA Act, *A National Vocational Education and Training System*

42 Department of Employment, Education and Training (1992), *National Goals for Vocational Education and Training in Australia*.

and that such education may be a pathway to vocational education. This approach, combined with the existing aims and goals for the VET system and the ACE national policy, provides Australian governments with a strong argument for ensuring that general adult education is well distributed and accessible.

Commonwealth and State/Territory governments share the funding of the vocational education and training system as they do most human services programs. A similar approach could be taken to broadening participation in ACE and strengthening lifelong learning. This would extend the Commonwealth's role in adult education from supporting development and research to the funding of targeted delivery and/or fee relief. The absence of any consistent fee relief provisions within most States and Territories and across Australia is an immediate inequity in access to ACE nationally. Fees have been identified both in Australia and in the literature as a barrier to reluctant learners. The Commonwealth's constitutional role in income support suggests that fee concessions could be an important role for it in shared arrangements with the State and Territories and a strategy which would lift its effort more to that of other OECD national governments.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY:

That the ACE national policy and the additional strategies outlined in this report for broadening participation be pursued through a joint Commonwealth/State/Territory program which:

- ***(i) recognises the significance of general adult education in leading reluctant learners to lifelong structured learning***
- ***(ii) is directly aimed at broadening ACE's participation profile***
- ***(iii) ensures a broader and more equitable geographic distribution of ACE through the States and Territories***
- ***(iv) recognises that fee relief is an essential part of broadening participation in a user pays system***
- ***(v) recognises that the costs of facilitating access by, and providing learning support to, reluctant or first time adult learners may be higher than for others***
- ***(vi) incorporates funding for professional development in the ACE sector to assist ACE providers enhance their learning diagnostic and support skills***
- ***(vii) includes national financial support for information, guidance and counselling targeted at people who did not complete schooling.***

5.4 Support beyond a course

Almost 40% of respondents considered that professional development of ACE tutors and administrators was necessary to ensure that they could provide effective information and guidance to potential participants about their learning options and that they could adjust and modify provision to ensure effective participation.

A similar proportion of respondents considered that broadening participation required access to other support such as accessible transport and child care.

As indicated earlier much of the literature identifies the lack of digestible information, income support, accessible transport and child care as regular barriers to participating in adult and community education. The provision of independent advice, counselling and guidance for people who are less likely to participate has been an area of priority in both the United Kingdom and Germany. In both countries such initiatives have been financed by the central government. A British study notes:

> *There has been a definite shift in the literature away from a counselling model based on 'skill-efficiency' towards guidance as an 'educative' activity, which stresses the importance of 'self-management' and helps the client to develop the skills of acquiring and processing information.*[43]

The National ACE Policy includes two relevant strategies:

> *2.1 (a) Support the development and implementation of improved information and advice services.*
>
> *2.3 (b) Negotiate access to services, such as dependent care (including child care), counselling and aids for people with disabilities, in order to optimise participation in ACE.*

5.5 Other technologies

Only a handful of respondents commented on the need for the ACE sector to expand its use of new technologies. Those that did comment mentioned approaches such as tele-cottages and mobile centres for provision. More emphasis was placed on the use of new technologies in terms of information about education options. For example, the North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council installed numerous Training Access Points (TAPs) throughout its area to provide educational information to people in a variety of locations where adults linger. The TAPs are touch screen computer terminals.

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[43] Bridge, H. and H. Salt (1992).

The National ACE Policy refers to technology in terms of arrangements for open learning technology for isolated adults and a broader strategy involving the dissemination and support to ACE providers of emerging developments.

A number of respondents spoke of the need to use new technology to assist remote and rural access and access by people in communities with limited infrastructure. However some also cautioned that the absence of appropriate telecommunication cabling and cost still prevents the use of some technology in remote areas. Further some reluctant older learners may initially find technology another daunting barrier, whereas it may assist participation by younger people.

5.6 Promoting ACE

35% of survey respondents considered that greater promotion and marketing of ACE nationally through initiatives such as Adult Learners' Week could be an important part of broadening participation. However a much larger percentage considered that any promotion should be locally based and well-targeted (see section 6.5).

In terms of national promotion the concept of a "learning be in it campaign" was discussed by the focus group and also by some respondents. This would be along the lines of the Life Be In It health promotion campaign.

The National Policy on ACE includes the following strategy:

> *2.1 (b) Conduct and support regular promotional campaigns to heighten the profile of ACE so that it is a nationally recognised identity.*

The literature does not provide much on this issue. One researcher suggests that there is likely to be little effect on the members of the community who have a passive or disinterested approach to adult education.

McGivney argued at the 1996 NSW Participation Conference that to have effect, promotion and targeting has to be very specifically focussed on designated community groups rather than on individuals.

> *General exhortations to people to get trained to improve the national economy will not work. Participation in education has to compete with work, family, friends, domestic work, shopping, hobbies, sports, travel, holidays, TV, cinema, restaurants and sleep. It has to be seen to have significant personal pay offs to justify expenditure of time, effort and money.....There may also be costs to self-esteem if a person is made to feel he or she is failing again. Learning has to be presented in such*

a way as to seem simultaneously accessible, enjoyable and beneficial.[44]

Consequently, in cost benefit terms, local efforts are likely to bear greater results than a broad multi-media campaign.

- Central or regional ACE structures are required in every State and Territory to support ACE providers and tutors to broaden participation.
- Shared Commonwealth/State funding needs to be linked to a broader geographic ACE distribution and to participation targets.
- Agreements between publicly funded adult education providers are required for greater co-operation, development of learning pathways and shared use of publicly financed infrastructure.
- Non-course support such as learning advice, information, child care and transport is required to support participation reforms.

[44] McGivney, V. (1996).

SECTION

6

PROVIDER STRATEGIES FOR BROADENING PARTICIPATION

This section consists of strategies for ACE providers to become more inclusive and reflect their communities more broadly.

6.1 Identifying learning needs

From the Australian literature and the project survey it appears that there are two main approaches that Australian ACE providers take to identifying and responding to learning needs.

1. The provider may think there is a need or an emerging need from a section of the community. The provider then mounts a course to address that perceived need and then sees what happens.[45]

2. The provider works with a section of the community to jointly decide what that group's need for learning may be and how best to meet it.[46]

Three quarters of survey respondents considered that ACE providers need to be more pro-active in assessing the needs of their community. This would involve consultation with a range of groups within the community who represent people who do not normally participate such as church groups, Aboriginal land councils, union representatives, neighbourhood centres and so on. This consultation should involve asking and helping people to understand and identify their learning needs. The assistance of key people and leaders from targeted groups in this consultation and planning was seen as essential. This is an approach which involves more of the techniques currently used by some ACE providers and by TAFE outreach coordinators in NSW. This approach involves comparisons of local participation profiles with

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45 For example, see Hastings Adult Education Centre in Bishop and others (1995).

46 For example, the approach of the Western College of Adult Education documented in Petheram (1994).

demographics and identifying gaps. It does not require very sophisticated statistical needs analysis. Some researchers caution against such needs analysis based upon spurious measurement of needs.[47]

A British report[48] on case studies in lowering the barriers to access to educational training for disadvantaged adults developed a framework for looking at access opportunities. This framework is presented in figure 6.1. As the authors indicate, there are no hard and fast dividing lines between the provider model and the user model and individual ACE providers may broaden their participation and still for example be delivering currently available courses. However it is fair to generalise that broadening participation requires moving closer to the user model and away from the provider model which is more typical of ACE practice in Australia today.

'Provider Model'	**'User Model'**
Curriculum is fixed and determined by professionals (educators)	Curriculum is negotiated between users and tutors.
Users take it or leave it - choice is limited to the range of options on offer.	Range of options is infinite (subject to resources).
Education is concerned with passing on a fixed body of knowledge by an active tutor to relatively passive students.	Education is a joint learning experience where the values and knowledge of all participants are recognised. The tutor creates situations in which people learn rather than acting as a font of knowledge.
There is limited opportunity for negotiation within a group to meet the needs of individual learners.	Learners can determine the content and method of the learning. Learners can even be involved in tutor appointments.
Courses tend to be located in educational establishments. (Our territory.)	Courses/groups are located in community settings including people's own homes, community centres, libraries, halls etc. (Their territory.)
Learning goals are pre-determined.	Learning goals may change, or grow through experience.
Access is solely concerned with the routes people take to reach the fixed position. (For example enrolment procedures, publicity, pre-entry access courses.)	Access is concerned with changing the nature of the provision to meet users' requirements. (For example, content, place, teaching methods.)

Figure 6.1 A Framework for looking at Access Opportunities

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47 Doerbecker, C.L. and B. Hake (1980)

48 Cowperthwaite, P. ed (1989), *Access in Action.. Breaking down the Barriers*, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, Leicester, England.

With limited funding from the Board of Adult and Community Education, ACE and Hospital staff worked co-operatively to deliver a program to support diabetic assessment of Aboriginal people in western Sydney. It had been identified that many diabetes sufferers did not know how to use their testing kits. The program started in the grounds of the local hospital but moved when weather permitted to a local park (with indoor facilities). Although there were initially only a few participants, now up to 30 people are meeting at any one time to learn general health skills. Participants bring food as their contribution to the program. Organisers say that its success relied heavily on the use of an important link into the community - the involvement of significant community elders.

Case Study 3: Aboriginal Health Training in Sydney

Despite suggestions in the literature to avoid locations associated with compulsory schooling when designing courses for reluctant learners, Sydney language and literacy workers have found that location convenience is a stronger issue for Sydney mothers enhancing their literacy skills. Learning sites, with on-site child care situated as close as possible to primary schools, ease transport, child drop-off and time difficulties in congested traffic. A free mobile child care centre offers limited support to programs in western Sydney.

Case Study 4: Facilitating access to training by Sydney mothers

The National ACE Policy[49] seeks to increase opportunities for adults to develop and manage their own learning programs (Intended Outcome 3.2). The strategies under this outcome could be strengthened along the lines of the user model in figure 6.1. The National Policy needs to explicitly recognise the connection between adult education and community development in becoming a more inclusive ACE. Two Dutch academics[50] note that cooperation between adult educators and others working in the community in exploring the potential demand among "non-participant categories at neighbourhood level" has been questioned as being a form of social or community work and not adult education. However they conclude:

> *In our view outreach work entails such an exploration of where adult education starts and ends, and may bring with it a necessary blurring of professional areas of activity such as adult education and community work and their potential fruitful collaboration.*

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49 MCEETYA (1993).

50 Doerbecker, C.L. and B. Hake (1980).

6.2 Reflecting the community

More than three quarters of survey respondents indicated that ACE providers need to develop more inclusive approaches if they are to involve the more disadvantaged within their communities. Such approaches may include peer learning models, study groups, mentoring, and direct involvement of cultural and community leaders along with information about role models. More inclusive provision implies more culturally and group sensitive course design and provision and full exploration of adult education principles. Many suggested this will require a direct recognition by ACE providers of their relatively Anglo-Saxon profiles and their "middle class beliefs and values" and the adoption of strategies which overcome this profile.

Aboriginal adult education is perhaps the area where it has become most apparent to providers of adult and community education that they need to directly involve and reflect the community to whom they wish to provide services. A Darwin based researcher[51] has attempted a synthesis of adult education principles and an understanding of Aboriginal adult education and learning styles. The result is a checklist or a set of criteria for the assessment of Aboriginal adult education programs. These are reproduced in figure 6.2. Most of these principles could be relevantly applied to other disadvantaged groups within the community.

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51 Byrnes, J. (1993), "Aboriginal Learning Styles and Adult Education: Is a synthesis possible?", *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 33 (3).

1. Is the program designed specifically for Aboriginal adults?
2. To what extent do the learners have control over the program?
3. Is the program suitable for Aboriginal adult learners of all ages?
4. Are the program content and teaching strategies culturally appropriate to Aboriginal adult learners?
5. Are the learners' prior experience, knowledge and skills valued in the program?
6. Is the program relevant to the learners' current needs as the learners perceive them?
7. Is the learning situation comfortable and familiar to the learners?
8. Does the program incorporate or draw upon the community elders?
9. Has the program been (a) designed, and (b) implemented with the learners and/or community in a collaborative way?
10. Is the program tailored to the specific needs of each Aboriginal community or group?
11. Is group cooperation fostered?
12. Is the program flexible and adaptable to the needs of the learners?
13. Does the program foster a holistic, problem-solving approach to learning?
14. Is the program timetable fluid or fixed?
15. Has the adult educator/teacher spent considerable time in the community?
16. Does the program provide opportunities for "hands-on" learning?
17. Does the program teach both the concepts and skills of the topic?
18. Are the teachers skilled listeners?
19. Do the teachers think of themselves as learners?
20. Is the communication between teacher and learners culturally-appropriate and sensitive?
21. Is the program conducted in the language preferred by the learners?
22. Are the teachers trained in cross-cultural communication skills?
23. Are the teachers alert for signs of stress in Aboriginal learners?
24. Is the program self-paced?
25. Do the teaching strategies make use of a wide range of learning resources in a variety of sensory modes, particularly visual?

Figure 6.2 Criteria for the assessment of Aboriginal education programs

The University of the Northern Territory co-ordinates a project based horticulture course for Aboriginal people living in twenty remote communities mainly in the Top End of the Northern Territory but with some around Alice Springs. Its design provides a clear example of best practice delivery to traditionally oriented Aboriginal people and to other hard to reach learners. Elements include:

- *learning material and participant logbooks are provided to volunteer tutors (who generally hold paid positions in the community). This material supports the trainer who then uses it to meet the individual needs of the learner and his/her community*
- *only practical and oral assessment is used (recognising the language and literacy skills of the participants, including that some do not speak English)*
- *the course uses Aboriginal knowledge about plants as a bridge into horticulture*
- *the course recognises, fits within and is sensitive to each Aboriginal's cultural, lifestyle, accommodation, time and community contexts*
- *it is structured very flexibly so that participants do not really feel that they are doing a course. Learning is integrated into daily activities and self paced. Students can move in and out of it as they need.*
- *participants and tutors create resources in their own ways and in ways that are suitable to them*
- *co-ordinating staff only access communities on invitation and in concert with a member of the community*
- *the tutor material is in a competency format and incorporates recognition of prior learning. The course is accredited and certificated.*
- *wherever possible co-operation across agencies is used to reduce the extreme costs of supporting such remote participants.*

To date 401 people have enrolled in the course between 1993 and 1996. 161 have withdrawn. There are 167 currently enrolled. 45 people have graduated and there are a further 15 graduations in progress.

Case Study 5: Horticulture Course in remote NT Aboriginal communities

6.3 Assisting learners to learn

The overseas literature places considerable emphasis on the role of information, counselling and guidance by adult education providers in assisting learners to learn. As previously mentioned, both the British and German governments are financing local initiatives in this area. Learning diagnostics is also attracting considerable attention. Only 14% of the survey respondents mentioned the importance of counselling and guidance. However some of these respondents were ardent about the significance of it for the reluctant learners.

One respondent argued that:

> *The teachers of the future need to be learning technologists. They need three basic skills:*
>
> 1. *As diagnosticians to consider learning styles and use of technology*
> 2. *As strategists to develop effective learning strategies and*
> 3. *As therapists to re-diagnose and revise the learning strategies.*

Respondents highlighted an array of approaches to assist learners to learn and gain the satisfaction of learning something that was enjoyable, fulfilling and relevant to them:

- targeting reluctant learners through existing networks or community groups rather than individually
- fast or self paced courses
- learn to learn courses
- one-on-one or one-to-two tutor to student support until people are ready for class
- making it easy for learners to dip in and out of courses (reflecting other pressures in their life)
- making learning relevant to individual learners and working from where they are at
- free entry courses
- limited use of alternative modes of assessment or no formal written assessments for entry level courses
- greater adoption of adult education principles
- recognition of the literacy and numeracy needs of all learners by incorporating literacy and numeracy into most courses. (This approach is supported in the literature.)
- learning which works towards valued and tangible products or which strongly acknowledges achievements. (For example, Canadian women's learning groups who build community facilities. Western Australia hopes to use a similar approach in language and literacy with learning based on students developing the skills, materials and tools required to produce newsletters.)

Three groups of unemployed people from many different countries who were graduates of a Commonwealth funded English as a Second Language course were given free entry to a Computer Skills course to acknowledge their achievement, to recognise the College's belief that their English competency was now sufficient to succeed in this technology and to give them confidence to try something many had never done before. This opportunity to extend their interest in computing enabled some to embark on further Adult Education courses. Others decided to enrol in other specific interest courses of which previously they would not have been aware.

Case Study 6: Parramatta Regional Evening College - free computer class offer

A US study[52] finds that the first few hours in class are critical in identifying those students who need additional resources to make them feel both comfortable and motivated to remain in the class.

Two British studies detail provider strategies by learner groups.[53]

Some respondents argue that increasingly employers are interested in an individual's capacity to learn rather than their holding a particular qualification. One respondent said that if ACE did nothing else but help people to understand how to learn it would be a major contribution.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

1. ***That funds are provided for professional development in the ACE sector to assist ACE providers enhance their learning diagnostic and support skills.***

2. ***That national financial support is provided to information, guidance and counselling targeted at people who did not complete schooling.***

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52 Jha, L.R. and J.M. Dirkx (1994), "Students at Risk: a Practitioner based approach to non-completion in adult education", in M. Hyams and others (1994).

53 McGivney, V. (1992a), *Motivating Unemployed Adults to Undertake Education and Training: Some British and other European Findings*, Leicester.; and J. Calder, ed. (1993), *Disaffection and Diversity - Overcoming Barriers for Adult Learners*, Falmer Press.

6.4 Building on ACE's strengths

80% of survey respondents indicated that more strategic and effective application of the characteristics of ACE providers (ie its potential for responsiveness, flexibility, closeness to the community and ability to offer non-traditional courses) would enable it to provide the threshold for greater involvement of the groups who do not traditionally participate. Both survey respondents and the literature argue that such flexibility is critical to providing the different responses appropriate to different groups within the community.

Greater application of adult education principles in ACE provision was seen by the majority of respondents as instrumental in broadening participation. A summation of those principles which draws on literature from the past 6 years is reproduced in figure 6.3.

1. Adult behaviour is not fixed but changes in response to both internal and external pressures; adults can and do learn throughout their entire lifetime. However, adults do not remain long in programs in which they have no incentive to learn.

2. Adult learning is facilitated when the self-concept and self-esteem of each learner are valued.

3. Adult learning is facilitated when the learner's own experience is respected as valid and regarded as a potential resource for learning.

4. Programs should appear to the learner to be relevant to life experiences and needs, both past and present.

5. Past experience becomes increasingly important as an adult grows older.

6. Adult learning is facilitated when each learner can participate in and be responsible for the planning and implementation of his/her own learning objectives, activities and assessment. A collaborative approach between teacher and learner is the most effective.

7. Adult learning is facilitated when teaching activities do not demand finalised, correct answers and closure; express a tolerance for uncertainty, inconsistency and diversity and promote problem-finding and problem-solving by both teachers and learners.

8. A learner's most pressing negative concerns need to be dealt with as a priority, in order to relieve stress and free energy for learning. These needs may not necessarily relate directly to the training program.

9. When adult learning focuses on the acquisition of skills and strategies, learners must have opportunities to actively use the skills and strategies they are learning.

10. Adult learning is facilitated through effective two-way communication between the teacher and learner which emphasises clarifying, summarising, listening and reflecting.

11. Success in satisfying needs and achieving objectives becomes a reinforcer for the changes already made and a motive for further learning. The earlier these feelings of satisfaction and success come in the learning program, the more likely it is that they will motivate further learning. Failure to satisfy needs or each objective may become a reinforcer for avoiding change and a motive for withdrawing.

12. Adult learners tend to have well-organised defence systems which mask stress and its accompanying emotions but do not alleviate it. Stress reactions which continue for too long without resolution lead to depression, disorientation, withdrawal, confusion, dependency and poor communicating.

13. Adult learning is facilitated when the requirement to learn within certain time limits is reduced or removed; that is, when learners can learn at their own pace.

14. Adults learn best when their vision and hearing are in the best condition possible and when a variety of sensory stimuli are used.

Figure 6.3 Principles of Adult Education

Several industry representatives among the survey respondents indicated that ACE in Australia could have a larger role with industry if it could better articulate the services it can provide and presented itself as a service provider rather than a seller of courses.

Two American academics[54] suggest that adult education providers could assist in fostering learning in the "learning organisation". They suggest that adult education could take the intellectual lead in defining its learning perspective within learning organisations. They believe that much of the literature on the learning organisation is misguided as it represents the organisation as a highly abstract, de-materialised, information processing system. Instead they suggest that for organisations to develop a greater capacity for learning they need to draw on their accumulated knowledge about adult learning. Adult educators can combine with corporate trainers and human resources developers in this activity. Such an approach was also suggested by several of the respondents.

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[54] Finger, M. and D. Woolis, "Organizational Learning, the Learning Organization, and Adult Education", in M. Hyams and others (1994).

For the past two years Macquarie Community College has been running a Certificate in Manufacturing course for 18 production line employees of a local manufacturing company. About half of the participants are men; for about half, English is their second language; all but three had not participated in training since leaving school; and at least three had very significant literacy problems.

The workers contributed their fortnightly rostered day off and the company paid for the cost of delivery by the College. To reward the commitment and success of the workers on completion of their first year of training, the company allowed each worker 8 additional days off for course work in the second year so that the course could be completed in a two year, rather than two and a half year, period.

15 of the initial 18 will graduate at the end of this year (1 withdrew, 1 retired and 1 left the company). The employees are now being offered training opportunities by the company which prior to the course they would not have been offered. A number of the participants are now also completing TAFE courses, with some others also hoping to articulate the course into a higher TAFE course.

The company is so pleased with the results and its cost that after the first year, it also contracted the College to run a language and literacy program for its employees (which now has 73 participants) as well as some Hand and Power Tool courses. The Human Resource Manager has recently written in an article in a professional magazine that the highlight of his year was finding Macquarie Community College and he is now urging neighbouring companies to use their local colleges.

The College expects to receive continuing work from the company, but points out that a lot of hard work and close monitoring went into the program to ensure that it consistently maintained a high standard. Tutors were selected on the basis of their abilities to nurture participants and the program, and their understanding of and commitment to adult learning principles. Course material was completely modified to recognise the literacy and numeracy skills of the participants and to ensure that examples and exercises reflected the employees' situation. Literacy teachers provided additional support to employees in the course.

As part of their program of community support, Macquarie Community College uses profits from these courses to fund their Special Programs for students with developmental disabilities. This year over 1100 enrolments have been subsidised in movement, aerobics, personal care, literacy, financial management, cooking, music or art classes.

Case Study 7: Macquarie Community College partnership with Industry

Many respondents argued that ACE providers needed to pay greater attention to giving clear information to learners about learner pathways and options.

This program creatively identifies and values skills, and guides participants through the Recognition of Prior Learning process, incorporating the creation of a portfolio and resume. It won the 1996 WA Training Excellence Award in the Access and Equity category and has been widely used inter-state. In NSW the Local Community Services Association is using the program to train workers in neighbourhood centres to assist their clients and to build partnerships with ACE providers.

Case Study 8: ***Learning Centre Link Award Winning Training Package "Life Experience Counts"***

Part of the National ACE Policy under the Access and Equity Goal is relevant here:

Intended Outcome:

2.2 Modes of delivery of ACE, access, entry and exit points, curriculum design and materials will reflect the special learning needs of adults to ensure access for groups under-represented in education, employment and training.

Strategies:

(a) Promote the development of flexible modes of delivery which reflect the diverse needs of adults.

(b) Facilitate the provision of appropriate professional development.

(c) Disseminate information regarding good practice.

Figure 6.4 Extract from National ACE Policy

The National Policy could be strengthened to recognise that ACE has an inherent ability through its community management, ownership and flexibility to assist people who have not been comfortable in traditional educational institutions.

6.5 Letting people into the secret

Over 50% of survey respondents indicated that participation in ACE could be broadened by more widely available and more digestible information about courses and pathways. It was further suggested that such information could be specifically targeted to particular groups within the community. It is considered important to demystify what adult and community education is and to provide a greater appreciation of course delivery being structured and designed to meet individuals' needs. Many considered it was important that pathways not be seen as a barrier to participation but that recognition of achievement be made available where desired. For instance, even if people do not complete a course it can be important to provide

them with a record of what has been completed so that it can be recognised for any future studies.

> *This program's target group was Aboriginal offenders, their families and at risk Aboriginal youth. Its aim was to improve their access to and participation in further education. Most participants had a family history of low levels of education, negative educational experiences and a fear of any organised systems. They also considered education a low priority and had little knowledge of what was available. Students were involved in the development of the program. It built on their interests, talents and aspirations, tried to provide positive mentoring and encouragement, a non-threatening learning atmosphere and a patient and non-judgmental approach.*
>
> *Of the 22 participants, 20 completed an individual program, 5 continued with another education program (2 literacy, 2 TAFE access and 1 University). Also other family members who had not participated in the program later enrolled in TAFE.*

Case Study 9: Tasmanian Aboriginal "progressive education program"

(Case Study 9 is case study 12 in the *Provider Handbook* of Rita Bennink and Pru Blackwell's report *Access for all in Adult Community Education*. The Handbook provides 63 other case studies from throughout Australia.)

In indicating that ACE can provide what learners want, providers recognise that a learner's immediate interests and the interpretation of government's apparent interest may not coincide. This raises again the issue of flexibility in financial assistance necessary to broaden participation.

Letting people into the secret about ACE is also an important element of community development efforts. A survey of literature on personal influence and participation in adult education reveals that

> *Face-to-face contact or word-of-mouth influence has been viewed as the pre-eminent means by which adults become aware of educational programs, and as a critical component of their decisions to participate in these programs. It has also been singled out by other researchers as a mainstream recruitment strategy effective in programs targeted at adults.*[55]

6.6 Working with other providers

66% of survey respondents believed ACE providers needed to work closely with community groups to broaden their participant profiles. A somewhat lesser proportion indicated a need

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[55] Babchuk, W.A. and S. Courtney (1994), "Toward a Sociology of Participation in Adult Education Programs: The Personal Influence Hypothesis", in M. Hyams and others (1994).

for greater initiatives with other adult education providers, especially with TAFE. One third of respondents considered that a sharing of government funded facilities and resources at the local level was critical to expanding ACE's ability to broaden participation. A TAFE Outreach Coordinator indicated that a common pathway was from TAFE Outreach to ACE then to regular TAFE.

The Australian literature includes many examples of ACE working effectively with other providers to assist disadvantaged groups in the community.[56]

A TAFE Outreach Coordinator in NSW whose project covers three large urban and rural local government areas gave examples of local ACE-TAFE co-operation which keep as their focus the shared desire to act in the best interests of their students and communities and the need to draw on the strengths of each provider:

- *in one country town the local ACE provider also acts as the contact point for TAFE Outreach. ACE and TAFE Outreach jointly consider the demand in the area and decide whether ACE or TAFE can best service it.*
- *in an isolated suburban area with a housing mix including Housing Department developments as well as executive housing, the local community centre coordinator, the TAFE Outreach Coordinator and the Community College Principal worked out a pattern of provision for Introductory Computer Skills courses that allowed the community centre to service both groups in the area, the TAFE Outreach resources to be appropriately targeted and the Community College to begin to use the venue for some of its activities.*
- *in another isolated area, there is demand for vocational education in the broad area of "horticulture". A process involving TAFE Outreach, the local ACE provider, OTEN and the TAFE Faculty of Rural and Mining has begun to develop a diverse range of options from introductory courses to post-trade or other professional qualifications, with students gaining credit for whatever work they do with any of the providers .*

Case Study 10: ACE/TAFE co-operation at the local level

In Western Australia, Midland College of TAFE, Learning Centre Link and the Volunteer Tutor Scheme are collaborating to deliver the Certificate of General Education for Adults at a community centre, the Lady Gowrie Centre, as a bridge from less formal learning into formal education. It is hoped that this collaborative effort will provide a model for delivery elsewhere in the State.

Case Study 11: TAFE and community centre partnerships

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56 For example, the case studies provided in J. McIntyre and others (1995).

The National ACE Policy includes one strategy which is relevant here:

Strategy 2.2 (d) *Within ACE and between sectors where appropriate, facilitate cooperative approaches to curriculum development and/or documentation.*

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY:

That the National ACE Policy be strengthened to explicitly encourage greater cooperation and working together by publicly funded adult education providers in pursuit of meeting the learning needs of disadvantaged groups within the community.

- ACE providers should be supported to use their many strengths and their capacity for flexibility and creativity to:
  - be more proactive in working with their communities, in identifying learner needs and in encouraging broader participation.
  - adopt a user rather than provider model of delivery.
  - develop a profile and use delivery methods more closely reflecting their communities.
  - utilize the many flexible and user responsive learning strategies covered in the literature.
- Funding should be provided for the professional development of ACE tutors to assist them to develop their skills in supporting reluctant learners.
- Local promotion activities, particularly those closely targeted to identified groups in the community, should be pursued.

SECTION

7

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

7.1 Options for ACE

From the literature, the project survey and our own deliberations three major options for broadening participation in ACE emerge. The literature is rather silent on the resource implications of different ACE provision strategies. A study[57] currently under way for the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education will provide some indication of the relative costs of provision in different situations. These three options are:

Option 1: ***Facilitating learning***

This option sees ACE providers working with their local communities, employers and reluctant learners to define their learning needs and develop learning processes appropriate to their participation in an increasingly global economy. In this option the process of adult learning is integrated with and supports the community development aspirations of the groups involved. ACE providers are seen as better reflecting the social mix of the community and participation processes include real community management and control, including by the new participants.

ACE would abandon much of its menu of courses approach and construct its provision around priority community needs. Government financial support would be distributed according to the spread of need as measured by the level of post-compulsory education and training and by the incidence of other education and training opportunities.

Option 2: ***Building on ACE's strengths***

This option would continue much of current ACE provision generally financed on a user pays basis, complemented with administrative support grants and fee

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57 *The Economics of ACE Delivery.*

relief. Participation would be broadened by ACE providers taking on more of a community development role in assisting the groups and individuals within their community who have not been participating to identify and meet their learning needs. This effort would be primarily financed by special funds to providers with participation targets attached to total grant funds.

Option 3: ***Opening doors wider***

This option involves more targeted promotion of ACE's traditional menu of courses and more proactive seeking of community and individual needs for learning through consultation with other providers, community service agencies and other local representatives.

Each State and Territory should consider which of the roles it wants ACE to perform. Having decided that, the next step is to develop an appropriate resource allocation process consistent with the role and broader participation.

7.2 Critical elements in broadening participation

The National Policy on ACE sets out many of the principles required to broaden participation in ACE. However around Australia government resources and providers' practice has not consistently pursued these principles. The following is an attempt to highlight the elements in ACE practice and its relationship with government which are critical to broadening the profile of ACE participation.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY:

That each State and Territory act to ensure that the critical elements for broadening ACE participation (outlined in Figure 7.1) are put in place.

A more inclusive ACE in Australia will require:

- Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments' recognition, endorsement and support of the strategic role of ACE in contributing to lifelong learning for the educationally disadvantaged.

- Financial support from government which:
  - reflects the expectations it has for the sector
  - ensures equitable distribution of ACE providers throughout the States and Territories
  - incorporates a distribution of funding which recognises comparative socio-economic disadvantage of communities and potential participants as well as community development and individuals with lower fee paying capacity
  - is linked to the achievement of participation targets, recognising that student contact hours is a poor measure of success in judging a provider's participation profile and in assisting some groups who will have interrupted participation
  - includes national financial support for information, guidance and counselling targeted at people who did not complete schooling.

- ACE providers' demonstration of a commitment to becoming more inclusive of their communities by considering:

  - their management structure, power and profile
  - their staffing profile
  - professional development, especially learning diagnostics
  - improved community consultation, needs analysis, targeting and assistance in community development
  - accessible learner support strategies and packages
  - fully embracing adult education principles, especially learner centred strategies.

- The boundaries of ACE defined by each State and Territory to fully encompass service providers who are willing and able to meet the lifelong learning needs of disadvantaged groups within the community.

- Creation or maintenance of central or regional ACE structures to promote and support the broadening of participation and best practice.

- Greater co-operation (and rewards for such co-operation) between adult education providers, including negotiated agreements to cover development of learning pathways and shared use of infrastructure.

Figure 7.1 **Critical elements in broadening ACE participation**

- Three options for broadening participation in ACE are outlined.
- The Commonwealth in concert with each State and Territory government needs to decide which role is preferred and then develop a resource allocation method appropriate to that role.
- Critical elements in broadening participation in ACE in Australia include:
  - Government support and recognition of ACE's strategic role in achieving lifelong learning
  - financial support from Government linked to widening participation
  - ACE providers' demonstrating their commitment to becoming more inclusive
  - encompassing within ACE all providers willing and able to meet lifelong learning and participation objectives.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mr Joe Moore	Member Board of Adult and Community Education
Mr Chris Morgan	Senior Policy Officer Board of Vocational Education and Training
Mr Roger Petheram	Regional Adult and Community Education Officer Orana Regional Council of Adult and Community Education
Ms Sam Thomas	Director NSW Board of Adult and Community Education

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ACCESS FOR ALL IN ACE

These are the recommendations of the report by Rita Bennink and Pru Blackwell (1995), *Access for all in Adult and Community Education: Overcoming Barriers to Participation*, ACE Unit, South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education for ANTA.

a. That the maintenance of non-accredited learning, specifically as a pursuit to overcoming participant's low self confidence, is a vital component of disadvantaged groups' learning pathways and must be recognised in National and State policy and funded accordingly.

b. That a strategic plan for ACE workers be developed at State level for training options in:

- program planning
- program delivery modes
- teaching methodologies and
- cultural, gender and disability awareness

which will increase skills, knowledge and attitudes to improve the learning environment for disadvantaged groups.

c. That formal systems of dialogue be established on a regional basis between DEET, CES, labour market providers and participants to monitor

- referral appropriateness
- program relevance

and to advocate for changes to policy which reduces the effectiveness of learning in labour market programs.

d. That National and State policy development and funding guidelines include the provision of low cost, culturally appropriate and accessible child care as central to increasing access to ACE programs for disadvantaged groups.

e. That formal regional networks of ACE providers be established in each State and Territory with support and resourcing for coordination to ensure their long term viability.

f. That memorandums of agreement be developed between formal education and ACE providers for resource sharing of information and communication technology in isolated rural and urban areas and that the cost of using the technology is minimised for access by disadvantaged groups.

g. That a process be developed to encourage providers to subsidise specific programs and/or fees for disadvantaged participants by charging higher fees for other programs/participants when the market will support this.

h. That a promotional strategy for ACE be developed and implemented at both a National and State level to focus on:

- specific promotional information for disadvantaged groups
- case studies of successful participants from disadvantaged groups
- information about learning pathways
- the diversity of ACE provision including the delivery of accredited curriculum

and with specific strategies to include:

- recognition of ACE as a pathway in the promotional material of formal educational institutions
- ACE in school curriculum and appropriate tertiary courses
- special events such as 'Adult Learners Week'
- the development of a national logo for ACE providers.

i. That "Recognition of Prior Learning"(RPL) be acknowledged as an effective tool for recognising the acquisition of skills from ACE and that States and Territories ensure processes occur at the provider level which will facilitate RPL for participants if they move to further education.

j. That States and Territories must ensure that learning pathways are accessible to disadvantaged groups by facilitating the delivery of accredited programs at an ACE provider level.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

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APPENDIX D

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

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Boards, Councils, State & Regional ACE representatives:

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APPENDIX

E

NSW GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ACE

Following is the content of *Recognising the value of lifelong learning for all*, the NSW Government Policy on adult and community education, released in November 1996

Introduction

Adult and Community Education plays a vital role in providing lifelong learning opportunities to the people of New South Wales. This, the first New South Wales State Government policy on Adult and Community Education, formally recognises the sector as an integral component of education and training provision in the State. The Government believes education plays an important role in creating an informed and just society. The policy affirms the role and potential of Adult and Community Education in achieving positive educational, vocational, and economic outcomes. It also recognises the role of Adult and Community Education in contributing to the Government's social justice objectives. The relationship between Government and Adult and Community Education was formally established through the *Board of Adult and Community Education Act, 1990*. Under the Act, the Board of Adult and Community Education (the Board) is required to:

- promote the provision of Adult and Community Education in New South Wales;
- allocate government funds to Adult and Community Education providers;
- advise the Minister of needs and trends in Adult and Community Education.

A structure of Regional Councils of Adult and Community Education facilitates co-ordination of provision throughout the State. The policy focuses on education and training provided by independent, non-government, non-profit, community owned and managed organisations. It supports the work of Evening and Community Colleges, Workers' Educational Associations, Community Adult Education Centres and community based organisations that have the provision of adult education explicitly stated in their charter and the capacity to respond to the varied educational needs of the community. The policy emphasises the need for these providers to demonstrate a commitment to build equity principles and practices into all Adult and Community Education services.

The Government recognises the magnitude and diversity of Adult and Community Education. The sector provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education. The majority of provision is general education which includes liberal education, languages, science and courses that contribute to quality of life. Adult and Community Education responds to the broad vocational needs of the community by offering an alternative entry point to the vocational education and training system. Adult and Community Education offers flexible, locally based delivery of accredited and non-accredited courses for both unemployed people and people already in the workforce — from school leavers to mature workers.

The Government acknowledges the close link between the sector and the community. The Government recognises the valuable contribution of community members and volunteer management committees in supporting the work of the sector.

This policy was developed by the Government in collaboration and consultation with the Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations which is the peak body representing providers of Adult and Community Education.

The POLICY

The New South Wales State Government supports Adult and Community Education because the sector provides access to quality, lifelong learning opportunities for the culturally diverse people of NSW. The New South Wales Government is committed to the provision of Adult and Community Education which is:

- **Equitable**
  — for all adults regardless of background and circumstance
- **Effective**
  — in providing quality learning outcomes
- **Responsive**
  — to the learning needs of the community and industry
- **Efficient**
  — in expanding provision to meet identified and emerging needs of local communities and individuals
- **Complementary**
  — to the education provided by the school, TAFE and higher education sectors.

The policy is based on the principles that:

An adult learner:

— is the focus of the individual learning process
— is capable of learning at all stages of life
— has a right to access quality, affordable education

Adult and Community Education contributes to society's:

— health and vitality
— democratic processes
— skills, culture and creativity
— cultural diversity
— economic productivity

Principles

The Government direction for Adult and Community Education is based on the following principles:

1. Adults are capable of learning at all stages of life;
2. The individual learner is the centre of the educational process;
3. All adults, regardless of their backgrounds and circumstances, have a right to access a diversity of affordable, quality learning opportunities;
4. Lifelong learning is central to the health, vitality and economic wealth of the community;
5. Liberal education encourages students to take a considered, critical and evaluative approach to learning and knowledge;
6. Lifelong learning is essential to the continuing development of informed citizens and the promotion of a democratic society;
7. Adult and Community Education contributes to the development of a skilled, cultured and creative society.

Purpose & direction

The purpose of the policy is to set a framework that will facilitate learning through the Adult and Community Education sector. The policy describes the commitment of the New South Wales Government and provides strategic direction for the Board of Adult and Community Education.

The New South Wales Government is committed to the maintenance and promotion of a dynamic, high quality and fair Adult and Community Education sector that has the flexibility to respond effectively to community needs. Adult and Community Education provision will be shaped by shifts in the learning needs and demands of the communities of NSW to ensure that people from all backgrounds and circumstances share access to the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to participate fully and successfully in the community.

Within this framework the Government will continue to provide funds to support the Adult and Community Education sector.

Goals

Specifically, the Government has five broad goals for Adult and Community Education:

- Equitable provision
- Effective provision
- Responsive provision
- Efficient provision
- Complementary provision

The goals and strategies of the policy are designed to guide the development of Adult and Community Education in New South Wales and reflect the broader directions and goals expressed in the *National Policy - Adult and Community Education* and the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training*.

GOAL

Equitable provision

The New South Wales Government believes that access to, quality participation in, and successful outcomes from education and training are necessary for all adults to equip them to participate confidently in society. This requires that: equity principles are built into all Adult and Community Education services, resources are distributed according to need and resources are directly linked to the achievement of more equitable outcomes for individuals and groups under-represented in education and training.

Adult and Community Education is founded on a tradition of open access to education. There are usually no educational entry requirements to most Adult and Community Education courses and the absence of formal assessment in most courses generates a positive learning environment. To lead to Equitable provision, the Government supports the implementation of the following strategies:

- The development of specific strategies to encourage greater participation and to maximise successful outcomes for ■ geographically isolated communities ■ people from non-English speaking backgrounds ■ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ■ people with a disability ■ older people ■ those experiencing social and economic disadvantage including people who are unemployed ■ women and men experiencing educational disadvantage including those with low literacy levels;

- The allocation of funds from the Board of Adult and Community Education for research to identify any systemic or structural barriers to access to Adult and Community Education to inform the design of positive measures to eliminate such barriers;

- The identification of gaps in provision, particularly in isolated areas and areas inadequately served, and the allocation of resources from the Board of Adult and Community Education to establish new Adult and Community Education organisations;

- The development of curriculum for Adult and Community Education which is inclusive and reflects the diversity of learners and takes into account such factors as ethnicity and language background, gender, disability, location and socio-economic status;

- The collection and analysis of Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard data to identify to what extent the above target groups are accessing adult and community education;

- The allocation of resources from the Board of Adult and Community Education for programs to assist the above groups to gain Recognition of Prior Learning;

The identification of qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure resulting outcomes from participation in Adult and Community Education by the nominated groups. For example, shifts and trends in participation, the completion rates and progress to further study of the nominated groups;

The provision of improved information on opportunities afforded by Adult and Community Education which is easily available and culturally appropriate for the nominated groups;

The development of funding models and strategies that incorporate equity considerations and allow delivery processes to match client needs and achieve improved participation patterns and outcomes;

The identification of approaches to funding and pricing that can lessen the fee burden for those experiencing hardship or disadvantage and improve access to and outcomes from education and training for those currently under-represented in Adult and Community Education;

The promotion of good practice in relation to equity principles being built into all Adult and Community Education services;

The allocation of funds from the Board of Adult and Community Education for professional development programs aimed at broadening understanding of equity issues and practice;

The development of approaches to overcome disadvantages caused by isolation and distance including the development of flexible delivery modes and the wider use of technology to overcome disadvantages;

The strengthening of partnerships with other government departments and the community to identify opportunities for accessing support services such as childcare, library, guidance and counselling and services to people with disabilities;

The implementation of the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plans for equity, which include strategic directions for Adult and Community Education for all the nominated groups and specific plans for Aboriginal Adult and Community Education and Language and Literacy.

GOAL

Responsive provision

The Government acknowledges the ability of community owned and managed organisations to respond quickly and effectively to local needs. To lead to Responsive provision, the Government supports the implementation of the following strategies:

The diversification in course offerings and expansion of the sector in line with demographic changes and changing learning needs of society;

The promotion of Adult and Community Education to other sectors of government, industry, small business and the community;

The further development of the sector in taking a lead in the delivery of education which addresses broader social issues such as health, employment, the environment, civics and citizenship;

The development of closer links between the Adult and Community Education sector and the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination Centres to facilitate input into the State education and training planning processes;

The regular assessment of Adult and Community Education needs and the regular evaluation of customer satisfaction by Adult and Community Education providers.

GOAL

Effective provision

The New South Wales Government is committed to the provision of Adult and Community Education that leads to positive learning outcomes for participants. The implementation of a quality approach, attention to planning, the collection of appropriate data and ongoing professional development enhance the effectiveness of the sector. To lead to Effective provision, the Government supports the implementation of the following strategies:

The implementation of the NSW ACE Quality Strategy to facilitate a culture of continuous improvement, customer satisfaction and consistent standards;

The allocation of funds by the Board of Adult and Community Education for the Adult and Community Education sector to provide staff with relevant and timely professional development to enhance the quality of provision;

The provision of the necessary support to ensure that Adult and Community Education is informed by current and relevant research;

The collection of data to the national statistical standard (Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard).

GOAL

Complementary provision

The Government recognises Adult and Community Education as an essential component of education and training provision. It is complementary to, but independent of the school, TAFE, and higher education sectors. It is an important entry point for those who do not have prior educational qualifications or recent educational experience and provides a pathway to further education and training.

The Government believes that Adult and Community Education has the potential to create a bridge between general and vocational education. To lead to Complementary provision, the Government supports the implementation of the following strategies:

- The further development and promotion of credit transfer arrangements between the Adult and Community Education sector and other education and training sectors;
- The further development and promotion of Recognition of Prior Learning policies and strategies;
- The expansion of training in skills assessment;
- The establishment of complementary education programs for young people of post-compulsory school age in consultation with schooling systems, the Board of Studies and parent groups;
- The review and strengthening of formal relationships with schools and with TAFE NSW;
- The strengthening of partnerships with the NSW Adult Migrant English Service particularly for implementing the goals of the National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy;
- The development of and improved access to accredited curriculum within the Adult and Community Education sector.

GOAL

Efficient provision

The Government aims to maximise the use of existing public resources available to education and training within the State. To lead to Efficient provision, the Government supports the implementation of the following strategies:

The development of approaches to funding which ensure that the expenditure of government funds within the Adult and Community Education sector meets the diverse needs of its clients;

The establishment of an equipment and resources program within the Adult and Community Education sector;

The active implementation and monitoring of the Joint ACE/TAFE Strategic Plan;

The implementation of the agreed policy on ACE use of TAFE facilities;

The establishment of an Adult and Community Education/Department of School Education Steering Committee to develop further co-operative relationships and arrangements between Adult and Community Education providers and the Department of School Education;

The maintenance of Adult and Community Education provision which is complementary to that of other educational sectors in NSW including TAFE.

Implementation reporting mechanisms

Responsibility for implementation of the policy rests with the Board of Adult and Community Education in liaison with the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination.

In implementing the policy, the Board will develop and regularly update a Strategic Plan which includes target outcomes and performance measures. The Secretariat of the Board will develop an annual Business Plan which makes links to the Board's Strategic Plan. Implementation of the strategies will also be also guided by complementary policies and plans including:

National Policy - Adult and Community Education

Community Use of School Facilities

Joint ACE/TAFE Strategic Plan

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Literacy Strategic Plan

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Plan

NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Equity in Action Plan

NSW ACE Quality Strategy

National Collaborative Adult English Language and Literacy Strategy (NCAELLS)

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy

Towards a Skilled Australia - National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training

NSW Social Justice Directions

NSW Government Disability Strategic Plan

Lifelong Learning - Life Transitions and the Older Learner

A Reference Group comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups including the Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations will be established to monitor the implementation of the policy and there will be formal monitoring and reporting of the achievements of the policy to the Board at six-monthly intervals. The Council of NSW Adult and Community Education Organisations will formally report to the Board annually on the implementation of the policy within the Adult and Community Education sector. There will be a formal, independent review of policy progress in 1999. Policy implementation will be reported externally and to Government through the Annual Report of the Department of Training and Education Co-ordination.

APPENDIX

F

VICTORIAN STATEWIDE FUNDING MODEL

Adult, Community and Further Education Board

Statewide Funding Model

Adult Education
in the Community

September 1995

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1. OVERVIEW OF FUNDING AND PERFORMANCE AGREEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

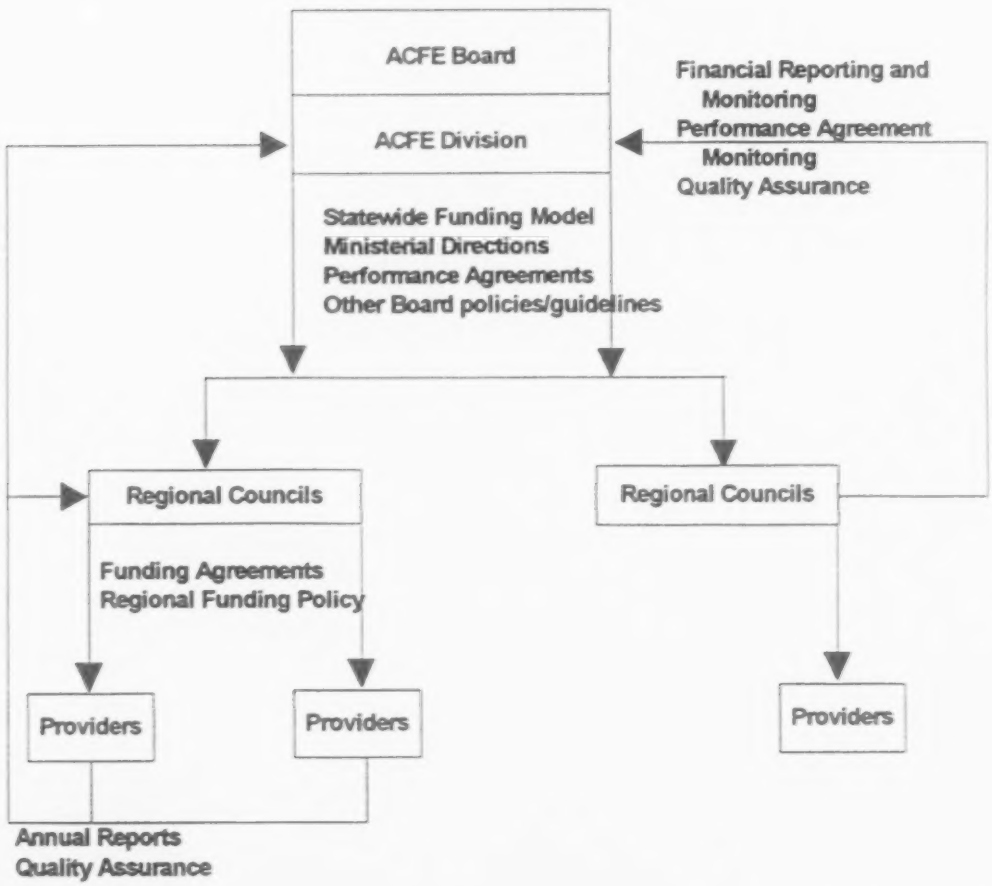
At a Statewide level, the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board determines the allocation of funds to Regional Councils in accordance with the Statewide funding model.

The broad use of these funds within a region is agreed between the Board and each Regional Council through annual performance agreements. These agreements include the expected outputs and outcomes, including activity targets derived from the activity targets contracted by the Board with the State Training Board as part of the ANTA agreement.

Within each region, funds are allocated to providers in accordance with the Regional Council's performance agreement with the Board, the Board's Regional Funding Policy, any other relevant Board policies and guidelines, and any Ministerial Directions to Regional Councils.

The Regional Council negotiates a funding agreement with each provider in receipt of funds, including specification of expected activity, outputs and outcomes.

These arrangements, in conjunction with quality assurance processes, monitoring and financial and operational reports and audits, are the main mechanism for ensuring accountability for the expenditure of Government funds.



2. REVIEW OF FUNDING MODEL

In December 1994 the Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board decided to review the Statewide Funding Model and the Regional Funding Policy. The purpose of the reviews was to:

- address inequities in the current funding arrangements; and
- ensure that, in accordance with the Government's management improvement initiatives:
  - funding arrangements are transparent;
  - budgets are clearly defined and outputs are measurable; and
  - accountability is explicit.

The reviews were undertaken by the ACFE Division with the assistance of Dr Nigel Smart of the Office of the Secretary to the Department of Education.

3. REVIEW FINDINGS AND PRINCIPLES OF A NEW MODEL

3.1 The Statewide funding model developed in 1990 was based on the size of a region's population, special needs indicators and population diversity. An analysis of the model and consultations with Regional Councils, providers and other interested organisations indicated that the model had a number of defects including:

- a clear perception by many Regional Councils and other interested organisations that it was not equitable;
- the non-acceptance by many Regional Councils of its factors as true indicators of disadvantage;
- the multiple counting of indicators of disadvantage;
- its failure to take account of ACFE provision by the Council of Adult Education and TAFE colleges;
- its inability to meet the requirements of Government management improvement initiatives; and
- its inconsistency with the current education and training environment, particularly with the introduction of the Australian National Training Authority arrangements.

3.2 As a result of these findings the Board determined that the new funding model should be based on a number of principles. The model should:

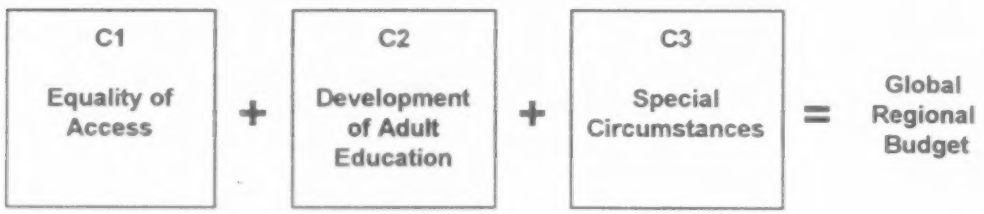
- be equitable in that it will reflect overall community demand to the extent that this can be gauged;
- take account of the impact of other providers in meeting demand;
- be easily comprehended by the parties receiving funds;
- be as simple as is practicable;
- ensure consistency across regions and providers yet be flexible enough to meet changing priorities; and
- focus on outputs and outcomes.

4. COMPONENTS OF THE NEW FUNDING MODEL

4.1 The new funding model has been developed according to the above principles. It comprises four parts:

- an operating framework;
- an Equality of Access Component (C1);
- a Development of Adult Education Component (C2); and
- a Special Circumstances Component (C3).

The funds allocated to each region will be the aggregate of its allocations under the three separate components.



4.2 Operating Framework

The model is underpinned by the following operating framework:

- the integration of planning for all State funded ACFE providers including community based providers, CAE, TAFE and, as appropriate, AMES;
- the development of a resource management approach within ACFE which concentrates on the delivery of specified services and the achievement of agreed outcomes;
- a primary focus on funding for Stream 2000 and above activity;
- an assumption that the average cost of the program mix across regions is the same;
- the introduction of a 2-3 year planning horizon;
- the minimisation of centrally allocated funding direct to providers;
- a review of overheads and operating expenses to maximise funding of service delivery; and
- a global budget to Regional Councils with increased financial and staffing delegations (employment, bank accounts etc.) subject to the development of common financial management systems and common accountability arrangements.

Elements of this framework will be developed and refined. In particular, further work will be done in the short term on program costs within regions and across program categories, a review of overheads and Regional Council accountability arrangements.

4.3 Component 1 (Equality of Access)

This component aims to ensure equality of access to ACFE provision (i.e. student contact hours) for people without post school qualifications.

While there is no reliable data on the educational background of participants in ACFE programs, the nature of the majority of Government-supported courses means they are primarily (although not totally) directed at people without post school qualifications.

In the absence of any direct indicator of demand for ACFE courses, the model recognises that lack of post secondary school qualifications is the simplest and most equitable indirect indicator of demand available.

It also correlates closely with indicators of disadvantage such as unemployment, income levels and language proficiency.

The calculation for each region's share of this component is based on:

- the population in each region aged 15 years and over without post school qualifications;
- the level of Government supported ACFE activity available to the population of the region (measured by the latest available statistics in community based providers, TAFE colleges and the CAE); and
- the relative availability of Government supported ACFE activity in the region compared to the state average.

Activity funded by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) and the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA) is not included.

It is important to note that availability is calculated according to the level of participation by the population without post school qualifications within a region in Government supported ACFE programs anywhere in Victoria, not just in programs within the region.

The model recognises cross boundary participation by focusing on the participation of students residing in the region and not on the location of providers they attend and by building in the slippage of students travelling across regions.

4.4 Component 2 (Development of Adult Education)

This component acknowledges the importance of the whole range of ACFE activities in community based providers. Hence it recognises the need for support for the general operations of community based providers, the development of new providers and support for general adult education.

Consequently, it is calculated on the basis of total regional population aged 15 and over.

4.5 Component 3 (Special Circumstances)

This component takes account of special circumstances which may exist within a particular region and affect a Regional Council's capacity to carry out its functions.

For example:

- particular factors may limit the capacity of a district to generate and sustain community based provision; or
- the costs involved in particular forms of delivery may require additional funds.

This component will be small (probably a maximum of 3% of the total regional funds) and will be applied flexibly.

Its application will be reviewed annually in response to submissions by Regional Councils about particular circumstances in their regions. Such submissions will need to include documentation of the additional costs resulting from the specific circumstances applying to a region.

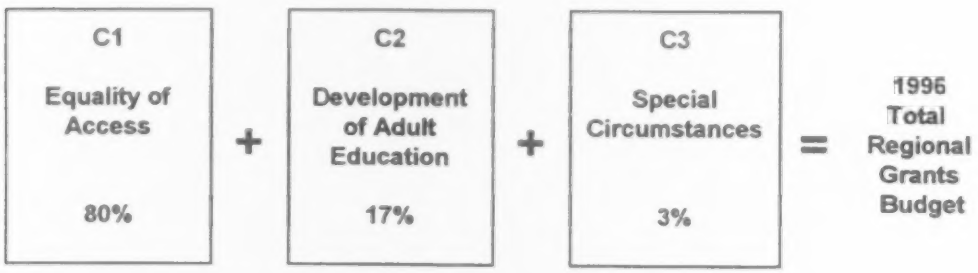
Regional Councils will not necessarily receive any of the funds allocated under this component.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW MODEL

The proportion of the total regional funds allocated to each of the three components will be determined by the Board. The proportions will be reviewed each year, thus ensuring the model is responsive to changing circumstances.

In 1996 the funds will be allocated as follows:

C1 (Equality of Access)	80%
C2 (Development of Adult Education)	17%
C3 (Special Circumstances)	3%



Each Regional Council will receive a single amount of funding, representing the aggregate of its allocations under C1, C2 and C3. It will then be up to each Regional Council to allocate the funds to meet the targets agreed in its performance agreement with the Board, in accordance with the principles of the Regional Funding Policy and Board and Ministerial guidelines.

The model will also be used to allocate other funds administered by the Board:

- Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) adult literacy funds will be allocated according to each region's proportion of Component 1;
- Commonwealth equipment funds will be allocated according to each region's proportion of Component 1; and
- State works and services funds will be allocated according to each region's proportion of the aggregate of Components 1 and 2.

The model will be updated annually to ensure that the Equality of Access component (C1) is based on the latest available participation statistics. In addition, it will be updated when new Census data becomes available.

6. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

Over time regions will be funded to ensure that each region's population without post school qualifications has equality of access to ACFE programs. This will be done through the allocation of any additional funds which become available, some minor reallocation of existing funds, the allocation of funds in recognition of special circumstances and more integrated planning processes across different types of providers.

In 1996 no Regional Council will receive less funds than it did in 1995.

From 1997, implementation of the model will also involve a comprehensive approach to planning of ACFE provision in Regional Councils and TAFE colleges. Shifts in funding to Regional Councils and TAFE colleges will be negotiated annually through performance agreements with the respective Boards.

7. REGIONAL FUNDING POLICY

The Regional Funding policy guides the allocation of funds by Regional Councils to providers in their regions. It covers Government requirements, accountability and reporting requirements, registration of providers, and fees and charges. It also includes model funding agreements for Regional Councils to use in developing agreements with the providers to which they allocate funds.

The Regional Funding Policy was revised for 1996 to overcome anomalies and address areas which were inconsistent with the Government's principles of transparency, accountability and outcomes based funding.

The Regional Funding Policy will be comprehensively reviewed during 1996 with a view to implementing a revised policy in 1997. Regional Councils have been notified of this and will take it into account in planning, policy development and resource allocation (including funding agreements).

8. PERFORMANCE AND FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Through the use of funding and performance agreements, the Government seeks to ensure efficient and effective use of available resources, consistency in procedures and enhanced accountability. The process to develop, monitor and evaluate funding and performance agreements is an integral part of the planning cycle.

The agreements take two forms:

- the performance agreement between the Board and a Regional Council, which derives its activity targets from the Board's contracted activity targets under the State Profile; and

- the funding agreement between a Regional Council and a provider in receipt of Government ACFE funds, which derives its activity targets from the Regional Council's contracted activity targets with the Board.

The agreements articulate and record the respective responsibilities of the two parties to the agreement and specify, among other things, the funds to be allocated, the anticipated activities, outputs and outcomes resulting from funds received under the agreement and monitoring and reporting arrangements.

APPENDIX G

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